A Practical Philosophy of Life.

VOLUME II.

IDEALS, TESTS AND HABITS.

By ERNEST R. HULL, S. J.

Editor of

THE EXAMINER.

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PREFACE.

THE first volume represented the philosophy of "Herr Schneebels" as a realist, comprised under the triple heading: "Facts, principles and actions." This second volume represents the same respected teacher as an idealist, and is summarised under the triple heading: "Ideals, tests and habits." The former was more ontological and objective, and was a study of temperament and character reckoning with environment; the latter is more psychological and subjective, and is a study of temperament and character reckoning with itself. The two volumes are therefore complementary, and together form a complete system of practical philosophy bearing on the conduct of life. A third and last volume is in contemplation, which will attend to the application of general ideas and principles to details; that is to the specific virtues which make up the structure of a rightly constituted man, and the specific vices or defects which spoil him.

ERNEST R. HULL, S. J.,
Editor of the Examiner.

Note.—Please correct the following awkward misprints:—

Page 77 and 80: "Complementary."

Pape 81 near bottom: "evitandum" twice.

Page 91: "Is reached as soon *as* the state of mind."

Page 105, just below middle read "*instinctive* love of pleasure," instead of *instructive.*

Page 116, third line, read: "so *as* to start a sin."

Page 126, "Quinley," twice, should be "Finley."

The rest are mere mis-spellings.

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HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

(By a Grateful Pupil.)

PART I.—INTRODUCTION.

THE extraordinary welcome which Herr Schneebels, in the former series, met with on the part of the reviewers, was accompanied with quite an inordinate curiosity to know who Herr Schneebels really was. Several attempts were made to identify him with certain professors, etc., whom the supposed writer of the series was known to have sat under in his studies ; but though some guesses were shrewd, they all missed the mark. Others had the boldness to identify Herr Schneebels with the editor of THE EXAMINER ; a very plausible error, since they recognised some of the teachings of Schneebels in some of the teachings of THE EXAMINER—a coincidence however which easily admits of another explanation. When all has been said and done, the identity of Herr Schneebels must remain a mystery to every one except those who happened to know him personally. But to those who knew him personally there is no mystery at all. Herr Schneebels is simply Herr Schneebels, just as Johnny Walker is Johnny Walker all the world over—and that is the end of the matter.

On completing the former series, we thought that we had finished with Herr Schneebels ; for we went on till our train of recollection was exhausted, and then came to a close. It was only when a fellow-pupil of Herr Schneebels came across our book, and wrote us a letter of congratulation on it, that we realised how, far from having done with Herr Schneebels, we had only just begun with him. Schneebels was a man that grew on one in real life ; and it only needed one short suggestion

from this fellow-student to open out a new vista of reminiscence which in our first tribute to his memory was almost passed over. What the fellow-student said was this: "I hope this volume on Schneebels is only the beginning of a series; for you have only displayed one facet of him. You have told the world a good amount about Schneebels as a realist, but said practically nothing about him as an idealist. Your treatments of facts, principles, actions, seems to me complete; but you have handled principles too briefly. You merely alluded to the idealism which must lie at the back of any really exalted set of principles; and this is a deficiency to be made up. I want you to write a second volume on Schneebels the Idealist."

The suggestion set us thinking; and soon there began to well up streams of recollection which soon swelled into a flood, and carried us on impetuously to the writing of this further series.

THE TERM "IDEALIST."

The term "Idealist" has unfortunately acquired rather a bad meaning. When we speak of a man as an idealist, we generally mean that he is very unpractical and even perhaps a bit fantastic. An idealist is a man who lives in dreamland, or is lifted up above earth on the clouds of fancy. Instead of facing things as they are and making what he can out of them, he is always contemplating things that might be but are not, and wastes his time in speculative yearnings for things which can never be.

Understood in this sense it would be impossible to conceive Herr Schneebels as an idealist, for he was intensely and above all things a realist. This was shown when in the opening of our former essay we emphasised Herr Schneebel's devotion to facts. He constantly taught that everything sound and true in life must begin, continue and end

in facts; and as soon as you depart from facts you plunge into a world of fog, if not into a world of delusion.

If therefore we conceive Herr Schneebels in this series as an idealist, we mean something altogether free from the disadvantages just described; something essentially bound up with facts and resting on the bed rock of facts.

IDEALS AND MATTER-OF-FACT.

Herr Schneebels, though never riotous like Chesterton, was nevertheless quite as capable of a good paradox; and perhaps the best paradox I ever heard him utter was when one of the students had ventured to put an antithesis between the matter-of-fact man and the idealist. Herr Schneebels took him up sharp and said: You are making a mistake there. Unless by an "idealist" you mean something more or less idiotic, you ought to recognise that the idealist and the matter-of-fact man are precisely the same. Or perhaps better (he corrected himself) I should say that it is the essential property of every sound idealist to be matter-of-fact.

We looked surprised, and asked him to explain. "I thought," said one of his listeners, "that a matter-of-fact man was just a man who had not one spark of idealism in him."

Herr Schneebels replied:—

That, I admit, is the common way of talking, but it is a superficial way. The idealist in the derogatory sense is a man of visions and dreams. His mind ranges indeed over the world of the possible; but he does not discriminate. He merely conceives ideas and fancies of what might be, and falls in love with them, and longs and yearns for them without asking himself whether those *might bes* are also *may bes;* that is to say, he does not distinguish between what is abstractly or theoretically possible and what is concretely and practically possible.

Let us take an instance. One of the dreams of poets has been that a man should fly. They say that even in the Rig Veda of the Hindus there is reference to men flying through the air in the coming golden age; and I was told the other day of some precocious Indian pundit who had found in this and a few analogous passages an evidence that the science of the aeroplane was already familiar to Rig-Vedic man. The bathos of this sort of thing becomes apparent when we recollect that Mother Skipton prophesied the same thing in England some centuries ago when no body had as yet dreamed of the aeroplane. The classic poets worked out the idea more artistically in giving Icarus wings waxed on.

But now to come to our point. There is an abstract possibility that a man might have been created with wings. There is even an abstract possibility that under certain conditions a man's arms might develop feathers and turn into wings. Hence there might arise an idealist who would spend his life brooding on this possibility, and yearning and longing for its realisation. He cannot by taking thought add one cubit to his stature, but seems to imagine that by taking thought he can add feathers to his arms. This is beginning at the wrong end of purely abstract possibility. The modern man, the same flying-man idea in view, begins from the other end—the facts of mechanics; and out comes the aeroplane. That is idealism of the matter-of-fact order. The abstract possibility is submitted to concrete tests; a fact-basis is secured to start from, and before long, the result is achieved.

IDEALS START FROM REALITY.

The instance (said Herr Schneebels) is taken from the mechanical order; but the same applies all round. An ideal always means something not actual, but conceived

as possible. Our mind is so constituted that the starting point of all mental processes must be the real, and we can only conceive the possible in terms of the real. An ideal, in short, is merely a piece of sublimated experience ; and without experience no ideal can even be conceived. Thus if only one man existed he could have no experience of Society, and hence he could not possibly conceive an ideal of the social virtues such as justice or charity or courteousness or graciousness or unselfishness. A sexless man could not possibly conceive ideals of chastity. Where no property existed there would be no room for ideals of honesty ; and where speech was lacking there could arise no ideals of truthfulness.

DESIRE FOR MORE REALITY.

But there is another point. It is not the mere existence of reality, but the desire for more reality, that sets the mind working out ideals. Thus in a world where everybody was just, no one would feel any yearning for justice. It is only by seeing justice mixed with injustice that we come to long for more justice. We feel that more justice is a thing well worth striving for. Immediately both intellect and imagination set to work. We recount to ourselves all the forms which justice can take, so as to aim at them ; and the forms which injustice can take, so as to avoid them. By degrees we picture to ourselves what a perfectly just man would be like, and how he would act under all circumstances. When we have built up our ideal, and proceed to test it, we may find all sorts of obstacles to being just, but they are none of them insuperable ; they only call for fortitude, and temperance, and self-mastery, and self-sacrifice for justice' sake. If our ideal will stand this test, we realise that perfect justice is not merely a *might be* but a *may be* and *can be ;* and then we know that our ideal is sound.

And why? Because although perfect justice is not in itself an actual fact, it is an actual possibility, and this possibility is a fact. In this way the ideal man is a perfectly matter-of-fact man, just because every point of his ideal bears a true relation to fact, and is capable of being realised as a fact.

IDEALS AND PROGRESS.

Therefore (concluded Herr Schneebels) every true idealist is a matter-of-fact man; but not every matter-of-fact man is an idealist. The matter-of-fact man, purely such, is a man who has no imagination, and therefore cannot conceive possibilities; or at least he cannot visualise them in any effective way. He realises only what he sees before him, and deals with that just as it presents itself, having before him no aim except to face the present contingency in a common-sense and right manner, without looking forward to anything beyond. Such a man may be a perfectly virtuous and upright man, practising all the virtues proper to his state. He is an idealist in the attenuated sense that he has a high standard of conduct before him, *viz.*, the absolutely unexceptionable standard of doing the right thing every time. But there is no evolution in him, no development. He is already perfect in his way, within the narrow limits of his own horizon. But no one would think of calling him an idealist, because his mind is confined to actualities, and does not fructify in possibilities.

Ideals are the very source of progress. They involve a recognition that things are imperfect, and are capable of improvement; a bent of the mind to see what improvements are possible, and a desire to turn those possibilities into actualities. For an ideal must never remain in the speculative stage, but must be a stimulus, and at the same time a guide to action. Specula-

tive ideals (said Herr Schneebels) are like clouds floating in the air, interesting to look at but unproductive. Practical ideals are like the same clouds precipitated as rain, to awaken the latent life of seeds, and start them growing into plants and trees.

THE GROWTH OF IDEALISM.

It is part of the nature of every cultivated man to be an idealist to some extent. Idealism shows itself as an instinct even in the young, as soon as their character begins to take shape. Their home training and the informal influence of example in their elders provides materials for an ideal—sometimes positively or by attraction: sometimes negatively or by repulsion. They love to imitate what charms them in others. "I should like to be a man like my uncle," says Wilfred. The ideal is presented ready made, and its pursuit lies in imitation. "I should hate to be a woman like my aunt," says Matilda; and so the child is led to cherish just those qualities which are contrary to her auntie's faults.

As adolescence comes on, idealism blossoms out into romance. In some it may take an objective form of exploit and adventure, such as running away to sea or hunting lions in Africa; in others, the more prosaic ambition of a professional career. But besides this there is sure to be a more subjective and personal aspiration—a desire to be, rather than to do—to be noble, great, heroic, *sans peur et sans reproche*, and so on. There may be a large amount of froth in all this, just for lack of experience on which to build. The boy who ambitions to be an artist, because he admires his uncle who is an artist, may have no capacity at all for art, and ought to take to engineering instead. The boy who wants to be a soldier may merely be influenced by Homeric verse, and may have none of the prosaic qualities which a

modern soldier needs. A certain aspirant to greatness may be of the most mediocre calibre and utterly incapable of anything great. But the same cannot be said of moral ideals, for these are concerned with virtue and right, of which every man is capable in some degree, and no one is disqualified from trying even for a high degree.

IDEALS IN GOD.

If you want to get hold of a clear and satisfying notion of the meaning of ideals (said Herr Schneebels) you must fall back on our scholastical philosophy. *Entia* are divided into *actualia* and *possibilia*, and we are taught to look upon *possibilia* as *realia;* as a real object, for instance, of God's knowledge. In a higher plane *possibilia* are just as real as *actualia*, because they exist pre-eminently in the divine essence. *Possibilia* are the infinite perfections of God viewed precisely as capable of being replicated in a limited or finite form. And that is why we call God the *causa exemplaris* of all creation. The mind of God, perceiving the possibility of replicating his own perfections in a finite form, selected out of infinite possibilities certain ones which, if taken together, would constitute an organised universe. Out of all possible universes he chose this one, and simply said: "Let it be" and on the instant it passed from the possible to the actual by the fiat of creation. But the universe already existed in God in a far more real manner than it now exists in itself; for it exists *eminenter* in God's own essence.

The more metaphysical-minded of the students took all this in with delight; and one of them remarked: "What wonderful stuff this scholastic philosophy is as soon as one looks at it in a living way." The less metaphysical, however poked some questions which led Herr Schneebels to speak more concretely: What I

mean is this (he said): Ideals are concerned with possibilities, and possibilities are not mere fancies, but are realities. First they exist as actual perfections in God; secondly, just for that reason they are capable of being realised in the world. God could bring them all from a state of possibility to a state of actuality by a mere wish. But he has left that to us, so as to give us something to do, something to live for, something to strive for. Even prescinding from the effects of the fall, God could have created as much more developed world. He might for instance have put electric lighting on tap, so to speak, so that we had only to turn a switch when wanted. He might have made locomotives and motor cars and aeroplanes grow on trees, and whenever we wanted one we would only need to pluck it. The same with houses and clothes. Food might have been furnished ready cooked, and bottles of wine might have grown in rows like cabbages. Instead of that he made a world composed of actualities and potentialities; he gave us a limited stock-in-trade of realities, and left us unlimited scope for developing possibilities out of these realities.

This, moreover, (continued Herr Schneebels) is one of the features of man's image and likeness of God. Our intellect is not merely an instrument to know things with, but an instrument to produce other things with. In this way we share with God a certain creative power —not to create *ex nihilo sui et subjecti,* but at least *ex nihilo sui.* In other words, we can so manipulate existing things so as to bring non-existing things into existence. And the conception of the possible is the medium through which we do it.

The same power which in the material world we call invention and production, becomes in the ethical world

idealism. Idealism means that we conceive as possible a state of things which is not actual, and for which the actual provides useable materials, which can be so modified as to result in some other and higher or better state of things. That ideal state of things may be objective or in the environment. For instance we aim at an improved social or civil system; a higher quality of life for people in general, or for ourselves and those around us. It may also be personal or subjective; that is, we aim at making self a better self, intellectually, culturally or morally as the case may be. The ideal embodies this programme conceived as possible and as desirable, and as worth while trying for, and thus furnishes us with a definite object of pursuit.

TESTS OF IDEALS.

If once you get this notion clear (concluded Herr Schneebels) you will get rid of all disposition to regard idealism as something fanciful, unreal, illusive, futile or estranged from reality. Although helped by the fancy or imagination it is really a product of the intellect, and is capable of rational tests.

The tests of all idealistic conceptions are two: First, does the conception represent something higher or better than the actual? If so, the ideal is so far sound. But secondly, is the thing conceived realisable? Do there exist around us the ways and means of attaining it? If so the ideal is not only sound but practical.

While insisting on it that an ideal must be practical, I do not mean (said Herr Schneebels) that it must always be attainable in its universality; but it must be attainable at least to some extent. Thus our ideal social system must not include dinner parties with the inhabitants of Mars. But it can quite feasibly include dinner parties with the inhabitants of Patagonia, given time to get there.

It might conceivably include the idea of getting rid of our clothes, but it must not include the idea of getting rid of our skin. Into our moral ideal we must not introduce elements which are incompatible with our state, or which involve for their fulfilment conditions which lie outside our reach.

Our ideal must not be *theoretically* unattainable, but it may be *practically* unattainable in its completeness. The Christian ideal has often been called "the unattainable ideal"; and yet it is a sound ideal, because it puts a man so thoroughly in the right direction that even if he attains one thousandth part of what it contains he is improving himself; and every ideal which carries some improvement with it is a sound ideal. To take a simple analogy: A cricketer who makes it his ideal to take the middle stump every ball will never attain it, and may never succeed even once. But it will stimulate him to bowl better, and that by itself is a gain. Similarly a man who makes it his ideal never to lose his temper is sure not to succeed. But if it helps him to keep his temper even once in a dozen times it is doing its work. The value of an ideal lies not so much in the attainment as in the stimulus to effort; for every effort to attain a virtue is in itself a virtue, even if the effort fails to issue in the result aimed at.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART II.—THE MEANING OF LIFE.

We had been studying in school the thesis on life, which struck us, when treated scholastically, as singularly devoid of life. There came in due course according to the tree of Porphyry: *Corpus—Animatum—Sensitivum*, etc. Herr Schneebels had not rested content with the dry scholastic exposition but had given us an enlightening survey of molecular forces, accretion, addition of parts outside parts, ions, electrons, laws of matter of motion, etc. Passing to the *ens vivum*, we were first told in dry technical terms of the *principium vitale*, and *actus immanens* and *intus-susceptio* and the rest. But after officially working over the text-book Herr Schneebels emerged from behind it, and warmed and vivified the subject most charmingly. "It is usual, he said, to begin at the abstract minimum of the definition of life, such as we find in the lowest order of plants. I find it more profitable (he said) to reverse the course, and begin with the maximum of which we have direct knowledge—our own human life, which we are actually living. The reason is because the only life we know directly is our own, and it is from this as a starting-point that we can infer what life is in other beings. When we have thoroughly grasped what life means in ourselves, with the real specimen lying on the table for vivisection, we can take that as our starting-point. We can first work downwards by subtraction to the material orders of life, the animals and plants, and then by prescinding from matter work upwards to the life of the angels and of God. Besides what he gave us in school, we often talked the subject over elsewhere; and this is what we gathered from him on the ethical side of the question.

I will not attempt a general definition of life, he said, for that is far too comprehensive. But I will give you a working definition of my own, specially applied to human life: "What is human life?" I answer: Human Life is the power of growth by self-movement or the building up of self by assimilation and production; and this not only in the vegetative and sensitive, but also and chiefly in the rational order.

Self-movement in human life is called a function, and every function has a direction or tendency; and so we will examine human life first as a function and then as a tendency or direction.

LIFE AS A FUNCTION.

The life of a man functionally considered consists in (1) Perceiving; (2) Feeling; (3) Desiring; and (4) as a result, Achieving.

The apparatus of life, or that by which we function, is a set of what, *pace the modern philosopher*, I still find it convenient to call faculties.

A faculty is something in a man which links him to his environment—puts him in touch with the world of reality outside and around him. Every faculty involves a relation to environment; and this relation can be twofold and reciprocal.

It has been said that a genius or great man is often the creation of the age in which he lives, or a product of his environment; but having been produced by his environment, he turns round and exercises such an influence on the world as practically to create a new environment. This sort of thing is going on all over the world. Each man is to a great extent just what he is because he has been born in such and such surroundings, which have shaped and moulded him in certain ways. On the other hand every man who is not a perfect cypher

exercises a certain degree of influence on his surroundings; and this kind of action and re-action is always going on. There is also a sort of maxim which tells a man to be master of his environment and not its slave, and so on. This twofold relation is represented in our human faculties. Faculties can be, in fact must be, both passive and active. The eye for instance is first acted on by the environment, and simply receives the impress of the object seen. But if it stopped here, the eye would merely be a mirror. On the contrary as soon as any image is impressed on the eye, the faculty of seeing sets to work and turns the impress into conscious knowledge, which is the goal or purpose of the faculty. The knowledge of the object when acquired is the starting-point for further activity both on the part of the eye—which for instance is directed to the object more curiously with a view to gaining further knowledge—and also perhaps on the part of the limbs, which will move to the object and grasp it, etc.

Hence the twofold relation :—

(1) Faculties are aroused and acted upon by objects in the environment.

(2) Faculties, thus excited and acted upon, react in turn on the environment by the pursuit of ends or the attainment of objects.

Human Life therefore, regarded functionally, means a bundle of faculties and a cluster of opportunities for exercising them with a view of achieving results.

LIFE AS A TENDENCY.

So far for life viewed as a function. But function means movement or change. And every movement must have a direction or result, for the better or worse of self or others. (Of course there might be changes which are exactly *equivalent* in value, but these are rare and need

not be considered). We can at present prescind from all standards of judgment as to what is better or what is worse. There is a sufficiently general consensus in ordinary things that a man who changes in certain directions is improving, and a man who changes in certain opposite direction is deteriorating—physically, mentally or morally as the case may be ; and that is enough for philosophical purposes.

Hence the second point is to view life as a tendency *i.e.* movement in some direction which will reach some particular goal or result; and so far as this result is foreseen, so far does life become a responsible thing. It is altogether natural to man, by a simple perception, to realise the possibilities of better and of worse which lie before him; and to see what course of action, what tendency or direction of effort will lead to the better or to the worse. Upon perception follows a desire, based at least on the instinct of self-love and self-preservation or the instinct for happiness and well-being, to avoid what tends to the worse and pursue what tends to the better, such as he may conceive the worse and better to be.

LIFE AS AN EXERCISE OF CHOICE.

No arguments of the determinist philosopher (said Herr Schneebels) will deprive any man of the consciousness of his own freedom of choice. Cases will occur in which a man acts under impulsion and tells us afterwards that he could not help it ; but this only shows that a man recognises his own freedom and knows when he is exercising it and when he is not. As soon as a man finds himself habitually under a besetting inclination, such as drink, sensuality or the like, he at once recognises that things are not as they should be—that he *ought* to possess the power to manage himself, and ought not to be slave to his passions, etc. And supposing that he

is really incapable of resisting his impulses in a given case, he is thereby lacking in one of the first and most important qualifications of a man, namely to be lord and master of his own actions; so as to do things or not to do things by choice and not under compulsion.

LIFE AS SELF-DETERMINATION.

By the power of choice a man possesses a controlling power over his faculties. He cannot interfere with their processes in any direct way, but he can control them indirectly in several ways. First, he can prevent them from acting by depriving them of the objects which excite their activity, *e.g.*, by shutting the eyes so as not to see. Secondly, he can select the objects which excite them, *e.g.*, by turning the eyes in one direction rather than another. Thirdly, he can seize upon or ignore the impressions which have been made by the perception of objects, *e.g.*, he can go on thinking about something seen or put it aside and try to forget it. Fourthly, he can merely store up the knowledge acquired and keep it in reserve, or he can make use of it as a starting point for action. Fifthly, before acting he can reflect on the tendency or goal of such action, whether for better or for worse, and make his choice whether to pursue the line of action or to abstain therefrom. Finally a man, out of laziness or sensuality or indifference, may go through life in a careless manner, allowing his faculties to function at random, and following every impulse that they excite, in whatever direction it may be, quite regardless of the question of better or worse. He may view life simply as an enjoyment and not as a responsibility. But in this he is disregarding one of the chief qualities of a man as distinct from the animals. Theirs is a life of impulsive enjoyment, but man possesses the capacity for something higher.

LIFE AS SELF-DEVELOPMENT.

That "something higher" in case of man is the capacity of a man to rise in the scale of being within his own species. There is nothing analogous to this among the animals. They are born, they grow, they flourish, they decline and die without the least thought or calculation or effort of their own. The lilies of the field toil not, neither do they spin; and no amount of toiling or spinning on their part would improve them in the least. They are made perfect according to their type, and simply cannot help it. Man on the contrary, though born like an animal, soon developes into a rational being. In the rational order he has to begin at the very beginning; equipped indeed with faculties and the opportunities of using them, but unfurnished with any initial stock-in-trade of the knowledge which is required by a rational being. It lies with himself to build up his knowledge and to develop efficiency in turning it to account; and the difference which results depends upon his own efforts. It is true that men are born with vast differences of initial capacity; but putting those differences aside, and taking two individuals whose initial capacity is exactly equal, no one fails to realise how quickly the two will differentiate if one of them takes life seriously from the first and the other takes it as a mere pastime.

Life therefore is a period of existence offering a chance of self-development (otherwise called self-realisation); that is, bringing out our latent capabilities, and turning them from the potential to the actual.

LIFE IS SUBJECT TO LAW.

Law is the imposition of the will of a law-giver upon whatever is subject to his authority and power. In inanimate nature the will of the Creator is stamped upon the material and the forces which make up the universe.

They must exist and move as they do because they are so constituted. In the lower orders of life, the will of the Creator is similarly stamped on the nature of each species, though in the animal at least the execution of the law is carried out through conscious feeling and desire. In man, the microcosm, both these kinds of law are found pervading the material, vegetative and sensitive parts of his nature, but over and above these comes the higher law of reason; and with reason liberty, or the power of contingent action absolutely determined by his own will. The law imposed on the lower order of creation is mechanical and necessary, admitting of no alternative. The law imposed on rational man is moral, and necessary only in the moral sense; that is to say I *ought* to obey the law, but I *can* disregard it and act contrary to it. This law, stated in metaphysical terms, is the law of reason; a consciousness of the true and the good, and that the true and the good ought to be embraced and the false and evil eschewed. These ideas or judgments present themselves therefore not merely as perceptions in the intellect but as dictates to the will. In conformity with them I *ought* to wish and to act. But the dictate goes further and says I *must* so wish and act, and must never wish or act to the contrary.

"On what compulsion must I, tell me that?" exclaimed Herr Schneebels at this point. "On the compulsion of right" replies the voice of conscience. Right is our name for the will of the divine law-giver reflecting his perfect nature. Right is the goodness of the being of God, in whose image and likeness we were made; and what is nature in him is compulsion to us—a moral compulsion which turns the ought into the must. "If you would be as God Almighty meant you to be; if you would attain that destiny of well-being which he has created you to

attain; if you would realise your instincts of self-love and self-preservation and self-development which God has stamped on your nature as an expression of his will in your regard—then you not only ought, but you must eschew evil and do good as the light of reason and the voice of conscience present them to you.

LIFE AS A DESTINY.

From this we pass on to realise that life is also a destiny. We are not concerned, in philosophy, with the specific form which that destiny takes, as for instance it is taught in the Christian revelation. Unaided reason points us to a goal of self-development and self-realisation which will be accompanied with and result in the highest happiness and well-being of which we are capable. And it stands to reason also that the failure to attain this destiny will be the greatest calamity which could befall us.

But secondly, we realise from the voice of conscience that the attainment of this destiny is not only an advantage to us but also a duty to God. God is our lawgiver because he is our Creator. To him we owe our very being, all that we are and all we can do; and therefore it is incumbent on us to be as he wishes us to be, and to do as he wishes us to do. Now God's wish is that we should be the very best that we are capable of being, and should do the very best that we are capable of doing. He does not impose upon us an absolute necessity of realising the whole of the programme of self-development and self-realisation of which we are capable—that He leaves to the good will of each. But He does impose on us of absolute necessity the realisation of a certain minimum. We are not to be punished for not attaining all the good of which we are capable; but we must at least uphold the essentials of good to this extent that we must never

deliberately discard the good and embrace the evil instead. A persevering and unrepentant pursuit of evil, as it means a positive abandonment of the programme of life which God has imposed on us, so it also means a total forfeiture of the destiny of which that programme was the preparation.

LIFE AS THE PURSUIT OF AN IDEAL.

Assuming the bare essentials of right life as just described, the rest of the programme can be summed up as the pursuit of an ideal. An ideal is not by any means a creature of fancy, though it is formed through the imagination. It can be described as a synthesis of all the noblest and best qualities which we have conceived as possible in ourselves, and seen realised piece-meal in our fellow-men ; partly those we have known and partly those we have read about. Our capacity to form an authentic ideal comes from the fact that as our mind has been created in the image and likeness of God's mind, we possess a finite capacity of thinking as God thinks, and of appreciating what God appreciates. Our ideal can be conceived imperfectly because of the limitations of our mind ; it can even be conceived crookedly because of our general capacity to think awry. But still, given sound and sober minded reflection to eliminate extravagances, and rectitude of will to purge out corruptions, we are quite capable of forming an ideal which will stand the test of criticism; and which, when once matured, will provide us with a stimulating goal for aspiration and effort.

LIFE A PROBATION.

Out of all this emerges our last point (concluded Herr Schneebels), namely my favourite idea that life is a probation. I call it an idea, but in point of fact it is a plati-

tude. If life involves anything like the programme which I have just sketched out, and if the carrying out of that programme depends on the free-will, then every faculty we possess, every opportunity which comes in our way, presents us with an occasion for choice, whether we will adopt that alternative which makes for the fulfilment of life's programme, or whether we will throw away the chance thus afforded. Every such occasion furnishes a test, first as to what sort of man I am at that given time, and secondly, what sort of man I wish myself to be. Seen from the view-point of our origin and final destiny, life will be a success or failure in proportion as we stand that test or fail to stand it.

LIFE A STRIVING RATHER THAN AN ACHIEVEMENT.

Not in the abstract but in the concrete, it is of the nature of the perfect human ideal that it should be unattainable. However far we get, there is always a beyond. If you ever come across a man who tells you that he has attained his ideal, you may be sure either that the ideal is a low or restricted one, or else that the man is under a terrible delusion. The saints, who are the most perfect men we know, are all marked by this characteristic, that they never believed themselves to have reached their goal; their strivings never ended till they died. True therefore is it to say that life is rather a striving than an achievement; and for consolation's sake it will be profitable to add that our strivings are themselves an achievement. As the poet says:

> "'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all."

So we can paraphrase:

> "'Tis better to have tried and failed
> Than never to have tried at all."

Our failure is merely relative to the ultimate ideal which we are striving for. Our success lies in this, that every striving means some advance; and every advance has its full value, even if the thing aimed at is not attained.

LIFE HAS AN ABSOLUTE VALUE.

Life has an absolute value just because the soul is eternal, and because nothing of moral value attained in this life will ever be lost. Life conceived absolutely is self-development; life conceived relatively to God is personal service by conformity to conscience. The two coincide, and are merely different aspects of one and the same reality. True self-development is happiness in union with the Infinite Good.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART III.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PROBATION.

Among the features of the exposition outlined in our previous part, Herr Schneebels laid the greatest stress on the principle that "life is a probation" which he always considered to be the key to the interpretation of life, and made it the very centre of his idealistic philosophy.

Fortunately we have been relieved from the task of describing Herr Schneebels' philosophy of probation by a lucky chance. That same fellow-student, of whom we spoke before, wrote to us later on: "I wonder what became of Herr Schneebels manuscripts when he died? They were mostly concise notes; for he very seldom worked his knowledge into literary shape. His life-work

was to talk, not to write. I did hear that they were all bundled up in a garret under the roof, and that a new procurator, who came into office a bit later and who 'knew not Joseph,' saw no reason why such litter should encumber the place, and had it all burnt! I happen to have borrowed from Schneebels a few MSS. which I had no chance to return before he died. I hand them over to you to make what use you like of. They are certainly worth preserving."

Judge of my delight to find in the bundle of papers just the one I would most desire to possess. It is an unfinished essay on the philosophy of probation. We cannot do better than publish it as it stands, and then from memory try to carry on where he leaves off.

HERR SCHNEEBELS' ESSAY.

The manuscript runs as follows:—

What sort of a man am I, and what am I going to make of myself? I wonder whether there ever was in the world a human being who did not ask himself these two questions. Among the rudest and most elemental savages, perhaps, some exception is possible. But certainly among modern civilised and educated people this question is sure to have been asked by every individual times out of number; and probably answered in some way at least. The question is inevitable, for it springs straight out of self-consciousness. What sort of a man am I? The answer may be a very large one, for it will comprise everything that I know about myself —everything to my credit, and everything to my discredit too. The proud, self-conceited man will no doubt dwell more on the credit side than on the discredit side; but he cannot be altogether unconscious of the discredit side. He can at most leave that to others rather than emphasise it himself. The analysis will not merely con-

fine itself to what I am exactly here and now, but also *what I have been*, and *how I gradually came to be what I am*.

The result will be a summary history of my life. First what I was like as a child, as far back as I can remember ; then how my original character was moulded by training—the formal discipline of the school or of the home, or the informal training of example, experience and reflection. Then how far I responded to that training ; yielded to it or resisted it ; and how far I am better or worse for the yielding or the resistance ? Then comes the time when, emancipated from external control, I emerged into the outside world, equipped well or badly for life, according to the quality of the training and the profit I had made out of it, or the contrary. I found myself clever or stupid as the case might be ; ready to fill a high place or a low place, as the case might be. The world around me treated me kindly or unkindly ; fortune favoured or did not favour me ; my career began well or badly, and improved or became worse as time went on.

A BUNDLE OF QUALITIES.

The result of these antecedents provides half of the answer to the first question : What sort of a man I am. Looked at in myself, I am first of all a bundle of *qualities*. I may be amiable or unamiable, attractive or unattractive, noble-minded or base-minded, honest and sincere or dishonest and insincere, energetic or slothful, spiritually disposed or sensual, steady-going or fickle, a creature of deliberation or a creature of impulse, selfish or philanthropic, kindly or unkindly, genial or ungenial, of high aspiration or of low aspiration, master of myself or slave of my feelings, just or unjust, prudent or imprudent, temperate or intemperate, firm or yielding when confronted by obstacles, consistent or inconsistent,

constant or inconstant; and so on through all the catalogues of qualities which a man can have or not have.

A BUNDLE OF FACULTIES.

That is the first part of the answer: *I am a bundle of good and bad qualities mixed.* The second part is that *I am also a bundle of faculties*; powers of thought, word and action, powers of mind and memory and understanding and will, feelings too, and emotions and passions. All this proves that I am not merely a *static* being, but also a dynamic being; not merely a monument of *qualities* but a complicated engine for work. The mind goes back once more and realises what part these powers have played in the formation of personality and character. The qualities I now possess are not merely elements of inborn temperament, nor were they impressed upon me forcibly from without. Something of them was perhaps inborn, something of them was perhaps impressed. But even in this case their possession has not been a passive one. I myself have had a hand in their formation.

UNCEASING ACTIVITIES.

At every moment of my past life my powers of mind and will, of thought and feeling, emotion and passion, have been at work. In some cases I have taken what presented itself, and thrown myself into that, and allowed the currents of influence to work their own way. In other cases I have positively asserted myself, deliberately imposed one part of my character upon another, and thus moulded myself to my own liking—even dead against the forces which were pulling or driving me some other way. The qualities of character which make me *the sort of man I am* are to a great extent of my own making. Taking myself as I found myself at any given moment, I realised that I could not help being what I was at that moment; but I could certainly make up my

mind whether I was content to remain as I was, or whether I wished to make myself in some way different. Where I came to the former conclusion, I did not remain inactive. On the contrary I threw myself more ardently into the line in which I found myself, and by cherishing the qualities which I found, intensified and deepened them, and developed them further in the same direction—thus confirming myself in what I was, and making myself more so. In other cases where I felt a wish to be something different, the whole dynamic of my faculties was devoted to effecting the change, by depressing and weakening in myself that which I did not like, and developing out of the potential into the actual those contrary capabilities which would end in making myself more of what I wished to be. Through the long years of childhood and boyhood and early youth this process has always been going on. In this sense every man is Hegelian, in that his *being* is always *a becoming of something else*. My life has thus been a constant sum in arithmetic; a process of addition and subtraction, of multiplication and division.

REACTION AND INTERACTION.

But life is more than this. It has been throughout a constant action and reaction and interaction of forces. First comes the inherited temperament with which I was born, and the immensely varied tendencies for better or for worse which that temperament contained. Then come the influences of the environment; of health or sickness; the influences of home training and example, and of school training and example; the influences of companions good and bad; the influences of reading and observation. Thirdly comes the dynamic of my own faculties instinctively responding to those influences in one way or other; suffering the passive im-

press of some, positively embracing others, strenuously resisting others—the whole process being dominated by some mysterious deep-seated underlying tendency rooted in my very personality—a sort of *nisus* or instinctive disposition to develope self in a certain direction. It is as if the mind had from the very first been impressed with the idea of a certain goal to which all efforts must tend—sometimes realised in consciousness, sometimes not, but always there—determining the lines which I should take under all circumstances, in order that the goal might be attained. In some this goal is in itself a thing inborn, a temperamental disposition which works its own way without reflection or calculation. In others it develops into a conscious aim ; some ideal, no matter whether high or low—some view of the kind of man I should like to be, and the kind of things I should like to do, and the kind of results I should like to attain, so as to find my completed happiness therein.

LOOKING AHEAD.

The human mind is essentially constituted to look towards some end, some goal or object of attainment, and to direct its course of action in accordance thereto. That end or goal is in every case some form of well-being or happiness, or what is conceived as such ; but what that well-being or happiness shall consist in is not absolutely determined. With some it takes the low standard of securing sufficient of the goods and comforts of life to satisfy all wants. In others it consists in the ambition to achieve some great work, whether for its own sake or for the sake of making a mark in the world. In others it takes the higher ideal of moral excellence, the highest and noblest development of personal character, so as to make the world and the rest of humanity better for my having existed.

A CLUSTER OF OPPORTUNITIES.

But with the merits of these different goals we are not at present concerned. The only thing we wish to emphasise at this juncture is the fact that when a man asks himself: What sort of a man am I, and has answered the question truthfully, he will be driven back to the further question: How did I become the sort of man I am? And in every case the general answer will be: I began existence with certain incipient qualities of temperament, certain tendencies and dispositions of character, which if left to work themselves out would have ended in making me such and such a man. But two other factors also entered into the case; *inside* myself a bundle of faculties; *outside* myself a cluster of opportunities for the free exercise of those faculties. The combination of these three elements, temperament, faculties and opportunities, was capable of issuing in an infinitely varied number of results; but what particular result was to issue from them depended ultimately on my own personal self. Within me lay the power to yield to or to resist the different influences which lay within and around me; to suppress, or to cultivate, or to modify my original temperament; to apply or neglect to apply my faculties; to embrace or not to embrace my opportunities: to select among all these units those which I would make use of and those which I would pass by.

SELF-DETERMINATION.

In short, my life has been one long series of occasions for self-determination; one constant succession of forked roads between which I had to make a choice. In every case I made my choice, and therefore each time determined my direction anew; and the place which I now occupy is the collective result of the series. The

result may be for better or for worse, but there it is. In the past thousands of times over I could have helped myself to become something different; but that is all now gone. I have in myself at this present moment the exact product of my own antecedent activity; am I satisfied with it or not?

Even if satisfied, the question is not ended. I have still to look deeper and inquire whether I have good grounds for satisfaction; whether I have made the best of myself that could be made, or something less than the best. Hence arises the second question with which we began. Given that I am now what I am, what do I want to make of myself in the future? Even if endowed with such a supreme self-satisfaction as to wish nothing more than to remain as I am, still this remaining as I am is by means a thing which will look after itself.

CONTINUOUS CHANGE.

Again in human life the Hegelian idea is in some sense right: all being is a becoming. Nothing human ever remains standing still. If there are in myself and in my environment certain elements which tend to keep me as just as I am, there are thousands of other elements which tend to make me different from what I am. These influences are always bearing on me from all sides, and no man can ever escape from the necessity of choice. If I decide to make no choice I let myself drift. I do not make myself into something different, but the influences around me do. A determination to remain as I am is quite as difficult a thing to put into effect as the determination to become something different. In both cases I have to watch the currents of dynamic which are impinging on me; to give consent to those which correspond to my aim in life, and to put the veto on those which do not correspond. If it is difficult to change a

habit which is once strongly ingrained, it is also difficult to keep a habit exactly the same. Either it will grow deeper and more extreme by repetition of acts, or it will grow weaker by neglect of repetition. Hence as a matter of fact our character is constantly changing. Those who are inattentive only waken up to realise this when the difference makes itself obtrusively felt. Those who are on the watch will find the change going on quietly moment by moment, and will be able on account of their vigilence to direct the course of the change. But in any case whatever line is taken, the result is always the same; our life from beginning to end is one constantly varied dynamic; an immense working out of complicated forces which constantly modify the sort of men we are, and are therefore always determining what sort of men we shall be in the future.

LIFE A PROBATION.

From this point of view one can only come to one conclusion. That conclusion is summed up in the short and pregnant saying which is the title and the whole theme of this essay:—that *human life is a probation—essentially a probation.*

Probation means a *test* or *proof;* the putting of a person or thing on trial in order to find out what it is and what it is worth. In the ordinary dealings of life we accept things and persons as they are, and take our chance; but when it is a matter of committing ourselves to any important issue, we demand a *trial* before making a settlement. If it is a matter of buying a single box of cigars we are content to take the shopman's word; but for a large consignment we insist on trying *a sample.* In business life employees of unascertained merits are taken similarly on a month's *trial.* It does not take long to find out what a man is worth in any particular line.

You have only to confront him with his work and see how he faces it. The really competent man sets about the affair in a smart business-like way, and shows that he knows what he is about. Every circumstance in the day's routine affords a test of his knowledge and experience and ability. Even if he does not succeed perfectly at first, a repetition of instances will at least show whether he has the power to learn. The trial or probation has to be the longer and more searching in proportion to the importance of the issues involved. Hence the system of slow promotion in the army and navy, in order that a man, by going through the lower stages of the profession, may reveal his capacity for the higher. This is why in the case of religious orders or the priesthood—which are states permanent for the whole of life—a regular system of probation is insisted upon lasting a certain number of years. This time of probation is not necessarily spent in the precise duties which will fall to the lot of the priest after his ordination or the religious after his profession; for the object of the probation is not merely to see whether the candidate can perform his offices—which are after all easy enough—but whether he has those qualities of character which are necessary for his personal life in accordance with the ethical and religious ideals of his state. Hence the exercises which are undergone in the time of probation are often enough of quite trivial nature in themselves. But a man's real character can be manifested just as well in small things as in great ones; and in fact, their very smallness often affords the better test.

ONE GREAT SYSTEM OF TESTS.

These instances are enough to put in an obvious light the meaning of probation. They are however special instances of it, artificially contrived. The thesis which

we have now to maintain is not merely that probation is a thing which under certain circumstances is deemed expedient and has to be arranged for. Quite apart from any such special cases or artificial arrangements the whole of human life is a probation, or rather an uninterrupted series of probations from which no man whatsoever can escape. In the cases above given probation is imposed on individuals by other individuals for a definite object. But in human life in general the probations are imposed on all by the very nature of things. The whole universe impresses itself upon every human being as one great system of tests.

We abstain at present from saying what this system of probation has for its ulterior object, for that would be anticipating as an assumption here what it is our purpose to prove hereafter. But one thing is certain. The system of tests which the universe imposes upon every human being certainly achieves an object; and this is to provide an answer to the two-fold question with which we began this essay: What sort of a man am I, and what sort of a man shall I make myself in the future? In short, the universal test which makes life into one continuous and inevitable probation is this; a test of character, a test of personality.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART IV. PROBATION ILLUSTRATED.

HERR SCHNEEBELS' essay continues as follows:—

In order to show how the principle of test or probation enters into the smallest details, let us string together such a series of instances as might easily occur in actual life. Let us begin with the first moment of wakening in the morning. We might imagine that the state of sleep at least left character free from all tests; and so it is, as long as we are actually asleep. But perhaps we sometimes sleep badly, and sometimes we dream. Of all the things in the world dreams are the most profitless. Yet how many people, the instant they awake in the morning, assiduously recall their dreams, instead of thinking of something better. Some people are seriously influenced by their dreams. They make pleasant ones a subject of further day-dreaming, and unpleasant ones a source of apprehension or disquiet, even attaching a superstitious significance to them. There is a first test of character. A second is, how a man gets up in the morning. Even if there is no necessity to rise at once, there is a marked difference between the man who drowses along for half an hour more, and then reluctantly puts one leg out, and the man who, having had enough of a good thing, jumps up with vigour and freshness eager to get to his day's work. A man who at the last moment scrambles out in a hurry, and finds himself late at breakfast, or has to spoil his digestion immediately afterwards trying to catch a train, has undergone his test and failed. There may be loads of excuses for laziness—weak health, over tiredness and the rest. They may be legitimate or illegitimate. We say nothing about that. But every excuse and the way it is acquiesced in or re-

jected is in itself a fresh test of character, whatever that character may be.

DRESSING.

The way a man dresses, briskly or dawdlingly, wide-awake or absent-mindedly; the extent to which he indulges a disposition to yawn; the things he thinks of during the process; the neatness or slovenliness with which he deals with his toilet gear; what happens if a button comes off or a collar stud rolls under a chest of drawers; the way he combs his hair or shaves, and what he does with his shaving paper—are all fresh tests. One can learn much about a man by seeing how he deals with his slippers—whether he merely kicks them off, or whether he puts them down neatly in their proper place. Mankind can be divided into two great classes: those who would tolerate a pair of slippers put with the outsides together—the right slipper on the left side, you understand—and those who will tolerate nothing of the kind; and the division between these two classes is a far wider and deeper one than the triviality of the test would seem to imply. It is a question of the instincts of order or arrangement, of neatness or propriety, the instinct that things have a place and a relation to each other, and that the place and relation is worth preserving.

LIGHTING THE FIRE.

Meantime the housemaid below is trying to light the breakfast-room fire. [There is not much fire-lighting in India; and India thus escapes from one of the finest bits of probation in life—Ed.] I do not know, among trivial things, a better test of character than the lighting of a fire. To be always successful means almost the practice of a fine art. The exact amount of raking out to do beforehand; the amount of paper and chips and coal on

top, and the suitable arrangement of each ; how many matches you will use before getting it alight ; watching as it burns up, too fast or too slow. Perhaps all the paper burns out before the chips are alight ; perhaps the chips burn out before the coal is alight ; perhaps the chimney smokes. Throughout the process a spectator can detect manifestations of the careless or the careful mind, the lazy and the energetic mind, the distracted or the wideawake mind, the methodical or unmethodical mind ; the mind that rushes things by the shortest and easiest way and trusts to luck ; the mind that is too ploddingly, scrupulously slow and careful ; the intermediate mind which just balances between the two extremes—takes the test seriously enough but not too seriously, shows brisk self-confidence without precipitate and presumptive over-confidence, and put the right proportion between the means and the end. Finally if things go wrong, we can distinguish clearly between the patient and impatient man, and if the latter, what precise kind of impatience : whether nervous excitability merely, or angry passion ; and in the latter case, whether the person has sufficient self-control to keep it down and go on using reasonable means to the end, or whether he lapses into violence, dashes at the wood and paper and chips and coals in a frenzy, or even ends in scattering the contents of the grate all round the place ; bangs the fire-irons down with in a paroxism of rage and gives up the job in a fury. A fire that only wants a little judicious coaxing in order to succeed, is capable of bringing about a moral collapse like that !

Truly then the smallest trivialities of life are important when it is a matter of answering the question : What sort of a man am I and what sort of a man do I mean to make myself ?

BREAKFAST.

The fire is lit, the room tidied, the table laid, the bell rings, and down troops the family to breakfast. The character of each member has already been tested in one way by the getting up process, and the results of the test are manifest in the person of each one as they sit down to table. The whole tone of a family is not revealed so much by the way their turn up for dinner—for that is the climax of the day. The breakfast, with its homely and informal character, and the unlimited scope it gives to *deshabille*, is the real test. Manners and etiquette at table is one of the ways by which people show respect for each other; and to behave well in society and badly at home, because "it does not matter," is one of the signs that this respect is wanting. To be slipshod and lax in company, below the proper standard of that company, is an insult to all present; and it is part of true courtesy and good breeding to behave, if anything, better for sake of those at home, because they are nearer and dearer, and because they are thrown together so constantly.

We need not go into details showing how great a test of character is therefore provided by a breakfast at home as compared with a dinner abroad. Again, what happens if the tea or toast is cold, if a cup is spilt, if one of the children begins to cry, if the post arrives during the meal? What follows if a member happens to have a cold, or another happens to have a headache, or if a third happens to have to catch a train. Such trivial details can have a far-reaching significance as regards revelation of character. Then you have only to watch the children, how they behave, to recognise the kind of discipline they are subject to, and the kind of character which is being formed in them. And you have only to

see how one and all, from the oldest to the youngest, deal with the servants in attendance, to discover fresh betrayals what sort of a person each one is.

DUTIES OF THE DAY.

Breakfast over, next comes the occupation of the morning. Some have fixed duties, and disperse to face them ; others have a blank before them, or duties of an indefinite kind. Observe the promptitude, willingness with which the duties are undertaken at the proper time; how they are gone through, perfunctorily or carefully, leisurely or precipitately ; the quality of the work done ; the attitude in which obstacles and failures are met ; the completeness or raggedness of the result. Mark too the way in which people fill up their leisure time ; whether idling the hours away, or taking up a hobby ; how they perform it, and how long they can persevere in it ; whether their work increases in efficiency as they go on, or tails off into carelessness born of *ennui* as soon as the freshness of the enterprise wears off, etc., etc.

Follow one of the members to his office. See whether he is prompt, or always a bit late ; whether he sets to work at once, or loiters about reluctant to begin. Mark his dealings with his equals, those above him, and those below him. You can distinguish at once between the man who loves his work for its own sake, and believes that what is worth doing is worth doing well, and the other man who despises his work, and does it only so far as he is forced, and just as much as he must—scraping through as best he can, and glad when the irksome task is over. Mark too the qualities of the man's mind ; whether he is narrow or broad, small or large, whether he is all for generalities or all for details ; or whether he can combine both by filling in details under an all-comprehensive view of the whole, etc., etc. Mark again whether he

works selfishly, looking solely to his own advantage, or benevolently placing a due proportion between his own interests and the interests of others; whether he is honest and fair-minded, sincere and trustworthy, or dishonest, crafty, taking a furtive advantage when he can conceal it; whether his soul is hardened by the love of mammon, or whether he regards mammon as a thing to be used and not abused; whether his business habits are so austere as to deaden all human sympathy, and make him merciless in exacting from his subordinates the uttermost farthing, making no allowance for sickness or accident, and treating them as so many machines. In his business transactions observe whether he is obstinate and intractable, or accommodating and easy to negotiate with; and whether this latter quality remains in the golden means or degenerates into weakness. Again observe the man when his day's work is over; how he spends his leisure time; whether his whole interest in life is centred in business, leaving him at a loose end when its hours are over, or whether he divides his life into the pursuits of business on the one hand, and—what else on the other? Elegant and refined occupations elevating to the soul, or merely amusements and pleasures. Finally whether in either case he pursues these accessories in such a way as to increase his business energy by judicious refreshment, or to decrease the same by excessive indulgence.

SUMMARY OF FACTS.

I am not at this juncture concerned in laying down any ideal which a man ought to aspire to. I am merely concerned with the fact that there exists an immense and varied range of human character, some types of which we may consider good, some better, some best, and on the other hand some bad, some worse and some worst. I

am not concerned in preaching the adoption of good ideals as against bad ones. I am merely emphasising the following obvious facts :—

(1) That humanity in general is a creature of unlimited possibilities, in an infinite number of directions. (2) That every individual, according to his innate capacities or faculties, shares in this field of unlimited possibilities, some under greater limitations, some under fewer ; but, even in the most limited case the different possibilities of what a given man might become are enormous. (3) That the whole environment of life affords concrete opportunities for self-modification in a thousand directions, for better or for worse ; and the only question is what use will each man make of his environment by embracing or ignoring these opportunities as they occur one by one ? (4) It is in each case a matter of applying the faculties to the opportunities ; and whether this application is made, and in what way, is a matter which each individual has to determine for himself. (5) The choice made in each opportunity will either confirm him in what he is, and thus intensify his present state ; or it will modify his present tendencies and thus modify his state in some other direction. (6) That the frequent repetition of acts in a given line tends to work a tendency into a groove which deepens by each repetition into a confirmed habit ; and the deeper the groove, the stronger the tendency becomes in that line. (7) Therefore if that habit ever comes to be regarded as undesirable, the longer it has been cultivated, the greater the counter-effort needed to weaken or to get rid of it. (8) Hence it is that every action a man does is not merely a revelation of what sort of man he is, but is also a determinant of what sort of a man he is going to make of himself.

LIFE FULL OF TESTS.

Therefore we can say not merely that life is sprinkled over with tests, but is *full* of tests. They are not merely frequent occurrences but *continual* occurrences. Everything in life, even the most trivial thing of every passing moment, is a test. In short, life is through and through permeated with tests, and therefore it is inherently, constitutionally and essentially a probation.

But the probationary character of life is not a thing which forces itself upon us all the time. Persons of an unreflecting nature go through life haphazard, doing just what occurs to them at the moment, according to the current impulse, or selecting their course according to expediency, just as this or that incentive or motive or reason forces itself on their notice. They never reflect much on themselves, hardly ever ask themselves "What sort of a man am I?" or still less "What sort of a man do I wish to make myself?"—living from hand to mouth, so to speak, and leaving all calculations about their own character alone. Even these cannot, however, escape from the probation idea altogether. Some emergency, generally of an unpleasant nature, will force them to reflect. Thus some strong passion unchecked will lead at last to a catastrophe; and then will come the reflection: "If I had kept that impulse down in the past it would never have played me that trick now!" Or circumstances will make it necessary to stop doing what long habit has made almost mechanical; and as soon as the necessity for breaking it off arises, an almost insuperable difficulty will be felt. Or again a man may fail dismally to rise to a certain requirements of his occupation; so that past neglect of his capabilities or talents will come before him as a regrettable calamity. Such emergencies not only bring before a man the fact that life is a proba-

tion. They are in themselves one of the most searching of probations. For they put before him the clear necessity of recognising the state in which his past actions or want of action has brought him, and of bracing himself up to a strong and determined effort to do or undo now, with painstaking effort, what, had he acted otherwise in the past, he would have no difficulty in doing or leaving undone.

TESTS WHICH NEVER END.

This brings out a new aspect of the probation idea, namely, that there is never a time in life at which probation comes to an end. No matter how strongly confirmed a man may be in a certain kind of character, it always lies open to him to change that character by a change of policy; and there is always forced on him the choice whether he will do so or not; in other words whether, having realised that he is not the kind of man he ought to be, he has the backbone and determination to undo the past and to rebuild himself into the sort of man he ought to be. The faculties for becoming something else are always there, and the opportunities of applying those faculties are always there, and the sole determinant of the issue is the power of a man's will applied in the direction indicated to him by his awakened consciousness. Obviously the degree of success which will attend a given amount of effort will vary much according to the individual. But here again we recognise a new form of probation, namely, whether a man has the character to persevere in his efforts in spite of the arduousness of the struggle, and the disparity between the exertion and the results. In general it may be said that while the facility of change indicates versatility of character, difficulty of change brings out strenuousness of character if the required effort is made. And in either case the character is revealed.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART V. PROBATION APOLOGETIC.

So far for the first manuscript, which treats the idea of probation from an ethical point of view. But from another fragment we discover that Herr Schneebels had an ulterior intention ; that is, to treat the probation idea as an instrument of apologetic.

Among other arguments for the existence of God is the familiar one of the argument from conscience, or the sense of duty. That argument, stated succinctly, comes to this ; that conscience is the expression of a law dominating conduct, commanding this and forbidding that. It carries with it a sense of responsibility ; something which we *ought* to do. Now *ought* means "owing something to somebody" and it is impossible to find that "somebody" either in self or one's fellow-men. For although one may be said to owe to other people a due respect for their rights, so that we ought not to injure them, there are many points of moral conduct in which the rights of other people are in no way concerned, and yet conscience condemns them with an unequivocal voice. To say that we owe such and such duties *to self* is a contradiction in terms, for it is self which determines what self shall do. We feel, however, that self is also subject to the dictate of conscience, which tells us that we ought to live according to certain standards of right conduct, otherwise we are unworthy and blameworthy. If we adopt, even as a hypothesis, the idea that man is not a self-existent and autonomous being, but is the work of a creator who is our Lord and Master, we see at once that, since all that we are and can do is bestowed on us by our Maker, we owe it to Him to con-

form to his will by living according to the dictates of right which He has stamped on our mind. He has made us according to a certain type which we call our nature, endowed with certain faculties and powers, and provided with certain opportunities for their exercise; and as it is clearly his will that we should make a good use of these powers and opportunities to develop ourselves on the right lines of our nature, and not to abuse them to the degradation of our nature, it follows at once that the meaning of the otherwise mysterious dictates of conscience, and the sense of responsibility which we feel for our conduct, is fully explained.

Thus the idea of a God, creator and ruler of the universe, even if taken as a hypothesis, affords an explanation which does explain; and since all either alternative attempts at explanation altogether fail of their object, the logical conclusion is that such a God exists. Such is the usual form of the argument from conscience. The originality of Herr Schneebels consists in this, that he tackles the whole argument from a different point of view. Instead of conscience, which is concerned with sin and of duty binding under sin, he concentrates on our instinctive aspirations for perfection which are embodied in ideals, and which in another place, as we shall see later on, he calls "the higher conscience." His apologetic therefore does not supersede the argument from conscience but lifts it on to a higher plane. Although his particular argument does find its place in the scholastic catalogue under the name of the idealistic argument, its working out seems to have been singularly neglected; so that in our ordinary treatises of apologetics it rarely finds more than a dry and academic mention.

With this preface we reproduce a few fragments of Herr Schneebels' writings just as they stand.

Our starting point is not a theory but a pure induction; namely, that life is one succession of tests of every kind, which not only reveal what a man is at a given moment, but, by the way he faces each test, reveal also what sort of a man he is going to make of himself in the future. We are not at the outset concerned with the question how, or why, or to what end this state of test has been established, nor with the standards by which the test is to be judged, nor with the ultimate results to be achieved by it. We do not want to teach a theology or a philosophy or to raise a discussion; we do not even want to persuade anybody to do anything. What we want is to state the obvious about which no one can dispute. All we want our reader to realise is that we are talking platitudes all the time.

We first illustrate the test character of life by a number of concrete instances; the details of daily life at home, in business, in amusement, in pleasure; the various occupations of life; the various social relations; the various states of health and sickness, of good fortune and bad fortune, etc. Every detail of life, however trivial, is seen to provide an answer to the two foregoing questions.

When we analyse more deeply we find that what a man is now is the product of certain antecedents: first innate qualities, tendencies and capacities, or inborn powers of different kinds and degrees; secondly, the forces of environment; home training and example, school training and example, companions, reading, circumstances of family, etc. All these afford material on which the faculties work for better or worse. They also provide influences drawing the individual in this direction or that. Starting with the original stock-in-trade of temperament or inborn character, each individual has

the making of himself, either to intensify and deepen the innate, or to work against it ; either to yield to environment or resist it. These factors are always producing a result, and the result is the sort of man which I am at any given moment in the process—a being of such and such qualities and tendencies and habits and facilities and difficulties. Such being the result of antecedents, the next question is whether I shall remain as I am, or change for better or for worse—and so the process goes on to the end of my life.

Taking myself as I am, the question : "What I shall become," is also a matter of self-making, or behaviour in the face of the next series of tests. These tests can be analysed as under the following heads : passions, feelings, emotions, psychical desires, volitions, actions; trials of the intellect, trials of the will. Each department has its own tests ; and the whole of life is full of them.

Humanity agrees that there is such a thing as better or worse ; what it is desirable for a man to be, and what it is desirable for him not to be. We do not just now care what this standard of better or worse is. Given any recognised standard, the question is whether a man will choose the better or the worse, so as to become a better sort of man or a worse sort of man accordingly. The standard is called an ideal ; a picture so to speak of the desirable in humanity. The all comprehensive ideal would include all round excellence. But ideals can be selective ; and among all possibilities one of the tests is to see what ideal a man will adopt for his own. This gives him the standard by which to judge himself ; while the rest of mankind looking on will sit in judgment not only on the man, but also on the quality of his ideal. Variations of judgment are therefore possible ; but there will be a general agreement in broad outlines in deciding

whether a given ideal is a good one or not; and so the estimate of results as to what sort a man is will be fairly uniform at least in essential points.

FOUR EXPLANATIONS.

Now having cleared up the facts, we proceed to the explanation of them; and here we enter the realm of controversy. First, how does it come about that life is a probation? Secondly, what is the ultimate object or result of the probation. Four answers are given which we may call the materialistic, the evolutionist, the pantheistic and the theistic. It is the object of this essay to analyse these four explanations, and see which of them really does explain the phenomena.

(1) *The Materialist* holds to pure mechanical causality. The probation or testing is merely a fact in the sense that every cause has its effect, and every effect has its cause. A man begins life as the product of the concatenation of atoms which he has inherited from his antecedents. This concatenation is liable to be modified by environment, and must be modified by it; but the whole process is mechanical, and the idea of choice is a delusion. There is no moral aim in the process, and it ends at the moment of death without any continuity beyond death. This explanation denies the whole idea of probation in any ethical or moral sense, for there can be no ethics without free will. By setting up pure determinism it reduces the idea of free self-determination, duty, or responsibility to a delusion; and aspirations after self-improvement to a torturing fantasy. This is clearly an explanation which does not explain.

(2) *The Evolutionist* may be a materialist pure and simple, or he may go further, and hold something more than pure materialism. But if so, he must confess that the "something more" is a perfect mystery. In short,

he can advance on the materialist only by becoming an agnostic. There may be something more than matter and force; something vaguely spiritual; certain tendencies of a higher order inexplainable by matter and force. So far as he tries to rise from agnosticism he will likely enough become *a Pantheist*, implicitly at least.

(3) *The Pantheist* sees in nature a tendency which may be called will, having the moral and esthetical for its object. Hence the possibility of ideals, and of striving for them on the part of the will, which pervades the universe and is conditioned in each individual. According to this view the complicated progression of the universe is not precisely a probation or test in the sense of free self-choice. It is rather a phenomenal revelation of the very complicated and perplexing process by which the universe works itself out, sometimes as a mixture of good and evil; a conflict between the higher and lower tendency, which still is prevailing upwards, and will probably grow into some consummation infinitely higher than anything we now see around us. In this system the individual is merged in the universal, and the ordinary meaning of individuality, personality, free will and self-determination is obscured, or even rendered delusive and nullified. This again is an explanation which does not explain.

(4) Lastly comes the ordinary conception of common humanity, the conception of *Theism*. A man owes his origin to a creator distinct from the universe, and its ruler and law giver. Man has been created with a certain destiny before him which is eternal; and this life is the temporal candidature for that destiny—a time of probation in which a man shall work out his destiny for himself. The conditions of success are laid down, namely, that a man shall strive for the right.

He has been endowed with certain faculties within and certain opportunities around him; and the working out of his destiny depends on the use he makes of the two in combination. There is nothing wooden in the scheme. The kind and degree of faculties conferred on individuals varies immensely; the kind and degree of opportunities also varies immensely; the relation between faculties and opportunities may also vary immensely. Some will have much faculty and little opportunity, some little faculty and much opportunity. Some will find the right path easy, and some will find it difficult. Some are handicapped and some are at par. This gives an extraordinary inequality to human life, but it is all equalised by pushing down to the roots of things. A man's destiny will not be determined materially by the amount he does, but by the amount he does in comparison with his chances. The supreme determination of his final fate will be the equation between his lights and powers, and the use he has made of them; between his opportunities and his utilisation of them. By this personal equation all inequalities in outward appearance of the terms of probation are finally reduced to an equality. For all have an equal chance to achieve their final end, in the sense that it cannot be lost except by their own fault; and that fault again is only regarded as a fault so far as they really could avoid it and yet deliberately yielded to it. This is the theistic explanation of the probation idea. It certainly does explain, and is therefore to be adopted as the basis of a philosophy of life.

PROBATION EXPLAINS LIFE.

How the probation idea explains the meaning of life. Probation connotates the possibility of failure. A test, to have some meaning, must distinguish between those who succeed and those who fail. A probation which every

body passes successfully is not a probation at all. It would be absurd to fix that everybody who joins the army must be over five feet high and over 30 inches round the chest, because everybody would pass. But to say that everybody must be six feet high and 40 inches round the chest is a real test, because very few realise it. Similarly to put in our way trials of patience which would not provoke any one to impatience would not be a test at all. If the test of life is severe, those who pass it fully are worth something, which would not be the case if the test were too easy. Hence the first proper scope of probation is to put before men something worth striving for, and which really needs striving for, so that a man may think well of himself if he gets through. Hence the life of probation must be strewn with failures; and the higher the goal proposed by the test, the greater the number of failures.

The test is not one simple test, but millions of tests of all sorts. Hence there is rarely total failure or total success, but degrees of failure and degrees of success. It goes by the aggregate. A man who passes most of the test most of the time is a high-class person. One who misses most of the tests most of the time is a poor stick. If we find a man who passes them all, all the time, we have an absolutely perfect man; but nobody ever saw such a man. If we find a man who passes none of them, no time at all, he would be a wretch so hopeless than we cannot imagine him to exist.

Again the relative estimate always comes in. A man's success is not measured by his concrete results but by his opportunities, and the use he has made of them. One man may have risen pretty high; but considering his opportunities he might have done even better. Another is pretty low down, but we feel that all allowance must

be made, as his opportunities were small or his handicap large. Thus we have an absolute standard of judgment which measures the objective success or failure. But we have also a relative standard which is subjective, and estimates a man's results by his chances. The first is the standard by which we judge a man as regards his value in this life; but the second is the standard by which he will be judged in the life to come. For the very essence of moral quality is the application of the will to good; and the poor specimen who has applied all his will to attain all he could, has the advantage over the brilliant specimen who was "born with a silver spoon in his mouth," and could hardly help being brilliant, and has only applied half his will to the case. Had he applied all his will he would have been far more brilliant still.

In this way the probation idea explains the element of evil in the world, both physical and moral. Probation necessarily involves the possibility of failure. Hence if probation pervades all life, the possibility of moral evil also pervades all life. First, there is the possibility of the individual choosing evil; secondly, his choice of evil gives a new probation to others—namely the seduction of bad example. Then physical evil is itself a moral probation. Nothing brings out a man's character so clearly as the way he faces pain and suffering. The sight of the evil suffered by others gives openings for sympathy or callousness. The handicap of ill-health falls not only on the sufferer but also on those around. Sickness causes a man to fail, and brings about disappointment to others. Sickness renders a man dependent on others, and tests how they will answer to the calls of charity. Even among the animals physical suffering is a stimulus to exertion and a cause of attraction and repulsion. Thus speaking in general the existence of evil

is explained in terms of probation, because it renders such important services to the working out of character. In detail the problem of evil is an insoluble puzzle. But this very puzzle is itself a probation to faith—for it tests us as to whether we keep a steady grip of the main facts, or whether we allow ourselves to be so overcome by the difficulty of the details as to draw wrong conclusions. Secondly, probation explains that lesser evil called imperfection. Why is humanity such a "poor lot" that a perfect man seems almost inhuman? It is of the very nature of humanity to be imperfect, to be wanting in something; to have this or that weak point; so that "human frailty" is a proverbial explanation of all around that ought not to be. We do not find the same in beasts. They are strong and perfect according to their type. They grow, but they do not seem to improve. The only improvements in beasts are artificial ones; that is, we go against their nature and train them up to serve our purposes instead of their own. A human being is weak and imperfect because there lies before him the task of improving himself, and the function of probation is to see whether he will do so. Human life is essentially an effort for self-improvement, a striving for the better and the best. Thirdly, probation explains the existence of ideals. An animal does not conceive possibilities of self-development as man does. An animal is essentially content to be what it is; a man is essentially ambitious to be something more; or if he has no such ambition we feel that he is wanting in one of the qualities of a man. Ideals are not a mere imagination of possibilities; they involve a consciousness that such possibilities are first desirable, and secondly attainable by effort; if not fully, at least something can be done and ought to be done towards attaining them. This idealism is so impressed

on our minds, so rooted in our nature that it rises up spontaneously. It does not need preaching or urging. It does not need to be embraced under compulsion, or under a sense of duty. The ideal appeals to the mind by itself, and the response is instinctive—at least to admire and feel its attraction. Even where idleness or softness or pre-occupation prevents a man from working for an ideal, at least he would like to possess its realisation if it could be got without too much trouble.

The probation idea explains our aspiration after a future life beyond death. If life is most nobly spent in striving for ideals, it seems a dismal thing to think that when the attainment has been secured its accumulated results should be thrown away—simply dissipated and lost at death. The fitness of things requires at least a continuity of life in which to enjoy the fruits of exertion—in fact to make the exertion worth while. No man would strive to make a fortune if his enjoyment of it was to be cut off as soon as it was attained. He looks for its enjoyment at least for a spell of years, making the exertion worth while. But a fortune of money can be gained once for all, while the development of character is never at an end. It is capable of endless progress, and never reaches its goal. Hence as the full enjoyment of self-realisation does not come in this life, it is looked for after death—otherwise it is not possessed at all.

It does not matter what standard of judgment we take. The probation idea covers not only cases of what we usually call good character, but also bad character. If a man is a libertine, circumstances are constantly bringing out what sort of a libertine he is; whether a mere victim of passion against his better nature, or a devil incarnate making licentiousness his end of life; whether

he is engaged in a constant struggle of the higher dictates against the lower inclinations, or whether his mind is bent on evil and all his talents devoted to its prosecution; whether he confines his indulgence to himself or to those as bad as himself, or whether he revels in the idea of destroying innocence and corrupting others down to his own level; whether again his indulgences are tempered by calculations of prudence, health, etc., or whether he simply runs amock and brings himself to ruin. Then again, the same tests and revelations occur in case of the dishonest man, the thief, the burglar, the embezzler, the forger, and so of every form of depravity of which man is capable. In every case the man is revealed by the way he acts under every circumstance, and in every case the future of that man can be prognosticated by his present action.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART VI. THE HIGHER CONSCIENCE.

As the readers of this, as well as the previous series, will have realised, Herr Schneebels was a man whose mind was finally made up on most of the subjects about which he discoursed. His teaching was clear, definite and final. He had evidently thought things out, and matured his thought, and got it crystallised and ready for neat and clean delivery. There was no hesitation in any part of his philosophy about "*facts, principles and actions*" as depicted in the first volume. There was no hesitation in his philosophy of ideals and idealism or in his philosophy of probation. But there was one subject (and only one as far as I remember) in which he showed hesitation and diffidence, and seemed to be feeling his

way ; and that was what he called "the philosophy of the higher conscience."

It was confessedly a corollary to the philosophy of ideals, but one which in his mind had not yet taken definite and final shape. Whenever we got him on that subject we found him hesitating and tentative. He seemed to be labouring after some great and far-reaching product of thought, the materials of which were rich but complicated, and not yet ranged in order and synthesised. He seemed in fact to be on the look out for somebody to help him through, and was evidently talking with a view of eliciting the impressions of his hearers in order to clear up his own ideas. I am not quite sure whether he really got his philosophy completed in this connection after saying all he had to say. On the other hand I always felt that in his own mind the whole thing was clear ; but the idea was a somewhat novel one, which could hardly be expressed without giving the impression of heterodox originality—or at least not without coming into clash with well-established and traditional terminology. From what I found out afterwards, it seems that Herr Schneebels had been somewhat severely handled by his fellow-professors on account of his first utterances on this subject; and perhaps that is what made him feel timid and shy. For not only was Herr Schneebels absolutely orthodox in mind and disposition ; but the one thing which touched him to the quick, and hurt his feelings more deeply than anything else, was that anyone in the world should cast the slightest doubt on his orthodoxy.

This being premised, we pass into our subject.

A STRAIGHTFORWARD BISHOP.

According to clerical habits of thinking there is something anomalous in a lay professor of theology. Hence in a certain episcopal seminary where Herr Schneebels

was first teaching, there existed a certain amount of semi-scandalised wonder what the bishop was thinking of to employ him. Of Herr Schneebels' qualifications there was no doubt; and though his Lordship the bishop was never communicative about Herr Schneebels' antecedents, a hint was dropped that Schneebels had done a full course both of theology and philosophy at some unexceptionable university on the continent, and had taken degrees which would make the mouths of any of his own professors water.

Needless to say Herr Schneebels was keenly watched. All sorts of things he said were sucked from the brains of his pupils; handles were found, and alarmed denunciations sped into the episcopal office. The bishop's answer came back by return of post: "Please go to Professor Z. [that is to Herr Schneebels]; tell him what you have written to me, complaining of his teaching on such and such a point, and say that I have ordered you to interview him and get his real mind on the subject. Then report to me whether you stick to your complaint or wish to modify it." The complainant on reading this letter fell all of a heap. He simply shivered at the idea of carrying out the order, and shivered equally at the thought of disobeying the bishop. He said his prayers that day with more fervour than usual, and then wrote back to the bishop begging him not to insist on such an embarrassing course. The bishop wrote back absolving him, and giving him as a penance: "Next time you have any complaint against Professor Z. step into his room, tell him what you have heard. Say of course you don't believe it, and give him a chance to explain. Tell him moreover that you are doing this by my orders; and in fact show him this letter."

Needless to say, that Professor took good care to say

nothing about the episode, till it leaked out that five or six other complaints had been met by the bishop in the same way. They thought it very one-sided of His Lordship—favouritism and so on; shook their heads and prophesied that there would be fine fiasco some day. Two of them, however, laid themselves out really to catch Herr Schneebels, and then to bring him to book by a joint denunciation. They had to wait for long, but at last their chance came.

DISTASTE FOR CASUISTRY.

There was one subject for which Schneebels showed a decided distaste, and that was casuistry. One day he had been listening to a group of students arguing some subtle case, in which young brains were exercising their utmost ingenuity to prove that such and such an action (which any man of ordinary moral feelings would condemn without hesitation) was "aut peccatum nullum aut ad summum veniale." On reaching this conclusion they appealed to Herr Schneebels, whose only reply was this: "It always makes me sad to see young men trying to deaden their moral sense and spoil their ideals."

Being taken aback they asked him to explain, and he answered: "I have come across young men who began their moral theology with a lofty and delicate conscience, and have watched the delicacy disappear by degrees and a certain coarseness and bluntness take its place. It is one of the dangers of the subject. And I think it well worth while to put you on your guard."

The study bell just then sounded. It was several days later that we got him on the subject again; and then he gave us one of the most instructive lessons we ever had. What he said is reserved till later.

THE BISHOP AGAIN.

That same night a letter was despatched to the bishop

saying that "Herr Schneebels was setting the students against moral theology and telling them it was a demoralising subject, and subversive of conscience, and if this sort of thing went on the authority of the professor of morals would be gone." The Bishop wrote back: "I was talking on that very subject with Herr Schneebels myself only a week ago, and found his views in full agreement with my own. I have written to him asking him to step into your room and explain them to you in full. When he has done so, report to me whether you are satisfied." The complainant looked very white when he heard a knock at his door next morning. His "come in" was tremulous. Herr Schneebels, instead of entering in a towering rage as he expected, was all smiles. "I have just got a letter from the Bishop (he said) asking me to explain to you my views on the dangers of casuistry to young and untrained minds." There followed a quarter of an hour's repetition of what he had told us the day before. After that the Bishop never received a single complaint against Herr Schneebels again.

You will perceive by this time that the Bishop was what in homely phrase we call "a brick." The Church would welcome cart-loads of such. The outcome of his ruling was a diocese without a quarrel! That reminds us of another story about him. On hearing that two of his priests had quarrelled and had been off speaking terms for a considerable time, he arranged to invite both of them to dinner—unknown to each other. Each one felt elated at the honour, and secretly thought what a useful asset this would be if that quarrel came to his Lordship's notice. The Bishop got them into his residence at different times, and put them in different rooms. Quarter of an hour before dinner he went to them in turn and said: "I hear you have had a quarrel

with Father X. and have not been on speaking terms with him for a month. I know the outlines of the quarrel, and consider it equally unreasonable on both sides—not to have quarrelled, for that is human; but to have lived off speaking terms for a month over it—which is unchristian. I have brought you both to dine with me to-day. When you meet you will shake hands cordially and sincerely as if nothing had happened, and you will remain cordial and sincere in future, and never allude to the past. If a priest is to remain in my diocese he must be a Christian, and not behave like a turkey!" Both were taken aback, but both were immensely relieved; and they were close friends for the rest of their lives.

Now I will tell you what it was that Herr Schneebels said about casuistry—then and also at other times—gathering it all together in some sort of order.

THE SNARE OF LIBERTY.

What did you mean yesterday, asked Watson, when you caught us discussing a moral case and told us not to spoil our ideals? Do you think that moral theology does spoil our ideals?

Herr Schneebels replied. I never said that moral theology spoils one's ideals; what I meant to say was that if you use your moral theology in the way you were using it yesterday you—the student—will spoil your ideals.

How so? asked Beesley.

Herr Schneebels replied—By developing an overweening notion of the excellence of liberty, as if it were an unqualified good, whereas liberty is only a good if qualified, and that in several ways.

"I don't understand" said Watson: "Please explain."

Herr Schneebels replied: Moral theology, you will

remember, is in substance a study of law, which is a restraint on liberty under pain of sin. The study of liberty does not professedly come within its scope, but outside it. But liberty has to come in sideways so to speak, because liberty is just the thing which is restricted by law. From a moral theologian's point of view, "liberty is in possession" until the restraint of law is proved; and the proof must be a demonstration, not a probability, before the moral theologian can impose an obligation. Hence the saying: "Lex dubia non obligat." There follows a subtle discussion on probabilism, equiprobabilism, tutorism and the rest, all of which has for its object to reduce obligation to its lowest terms—the minimum which can absolutely be proved to bind under sin. Moral theology even goes on to call the restrictions of law odious—*odiosa sunt restringenda*—which sounds as if law were a hateful thing to be got rid of as far as possible. Whatever is on the side of liberty is classed as favourable; and *favorabilia sunt amplianda*—you are to stretch liberty as wide and as far as you can. These formulas are dinned into the ears of the students all day and are appealed to endlessly in discussion. Enthusiastic young minds throw themselves into the delightful task of reducing law to its narrowest, and expanding liberty to its widest—sometimes with an ingenuity which is rather unconvincing, and perhaps sophistical; and as this narrow study is not counterbalanced by certain other considerations which lie outside the department of moral theology, there is apt to grow upon the student a habit of regarding liberty as such an excellent prerogative of human nature that the more one has of it the better.

TWO DANGERS.

I put it mildly thus, because it serves me fully for all I

want to say. I am not supposing that the student imbued with this idea is so led astray as to throw off the ordinary restraints. I presume that he remains perfectly orthodox both in theory and practice. He is perfectly sound on the demonstrated obligations and restraints of law, but he is saturated with the minimums of casuistry: *Lex dubia non obligat ; libertas in possessione ; odiosa restringenda; gratiosa amplianda* and so on. I do not even suppose that he will put into practice all the subtleties of casuistry, that he will take that as his standard, and reduce his actual conduct down to the minimum, doing each of the things which can be done without sin, etc. Other motives will preserve him from that: the higher standard to which he has been brought up, and which he finds prevalent among the good people around him, and so on. But two dangers are likely to beset him. The first is a personal one ; he will lose, or find weakened in himself, his sense of the sacredness of ideals, that higher sense of duty which is attached to ideals [on this subject we shall have to enlarge later on]. Secondly, there is a danger that he may, in his office of confessor or spiritual director, contribute to lowering ideals of those who place themselves under his guidance ; and even without intending it in the least, may put a the blunt edge on tender consciences and even give wrong turns to right consciences. The blunt and unceremonious remark "That's no sin !" addressed to a penitent who has lived under the most sure conviction that it is a sin, can often enough do a sudden mischief which remains irreparable, and may lead to disastrous results in the long run. The answer "That's no sin" may be perfectly sound in theology as applied to the case presented ; but who knows what a world of psychology may be concealed behind in the soul of the penitent, which really

makes it sinful in his or her case. Or at least the conviction that it is sinful may be the only safeguard and check on some inordinate tendency, which will immediately have its own way and carry that soul to ruin as soon as the idea "That's no sin" takes possession of the mind. I am only a layman (said Herr Schneebels) but I do happen to have known a case in which the words "That's no sin," though absolutely correct as a verdict of scientific theology applied to the case as presented and understood, had the effect of breaking down a barrier of self-restraint in a young man which had kept him straight for several years; but as soon as that barrier was broken down by those three easily uttered words he became a hopeless slave to a besetting moral disorder for years after, as long as I knew him, and he may be under that slavery still.

GOOD BOOK-WORK, BAD PSYCHOLOGY.

"But that was his own fault," said Watson, "for not understanding things perfectly. If the penitent has wrong ideas the confessor is bound to correct them, and cannot be held responsible if the penitent looks at matters in a wrong light."

Excellent book-work (replied Herr Schneebels) but bad psychology. Even the dry scholastics recognise the importance of psychology in their maxim "*quidquid recipitur, recipitur in modum recepientis.*" St. Paul said quite clearly that there was no sin in merely eating meat which had been offered to idols, but added: "If my brother is scandalised thereby I will eat no meat for ever." There would be no danger in St. Paul eating that meat because he could dissociate it from the idol. But take the numbers of the faithful who from childhood had been used to regarding meat thus offered as consecrated to the false god, and the eating of it as a religious act.

Being recent converts from paganism the fascination of idolatrous worship still lingered in their souls, and everything associated with their past habit carried with it a real danger of relapse. Hence you see at once why eating meat offered to idols was so strictly forbidden by the Apostles. Supposing St. Paul had, like a juvenile moral theologian, shouted out "That's no sin," he would have done a world of harm, just because in the mind of the converts in general it was a real incitement to sin, and they would need a considerable change of mentality before it would cease to be a sin—for them.

Some of the most besetting moral disorders in the world around us usually grow out of some small beginning which according to scientific theology is no sin at all in itself. Drink and gambling are the two most obvious instances; the slighter familiarities with the other sex provide a third; an innocent desire for money can soon develop into a guilty one; experts tell us that fondness for sweets, for amusements and for dress are by far the strongest incentives to prostitution, etc.

I wonder (said Herr Schneebels) how much of the betting and gambling evil which we lament so much among Catholics is due to the emphatic way in which we preach the doctrine that "gambling in itself is no sin." The doctrine of course is perfectly sound as a doctrine; and as against certain Puritanical Protestants, it is often necessary to emphasise it. But looking at the mentality of laymen in general our teaching is likely to prove rather "strong meat." Argue as you may about essences, there lurks in betting and gambling a subtle something which tends so easily, so naturally to excess that when once the taste for it is acquired, it leads men almost inevitably to ruin. It is just the same with alcoholic drink, which is quite innocent in itself, but a

very serious danger for a vast number of men—who, as soon as they develop even the mildest habit of regular drinking, find it growing upon them with such force that one can prophesy their ruin.

THE NEED OF RESTRAINTS.

The moral lesson I want to inculcate is commonplace enough (concluded Herr Schneebels). You may quite scientifically divide the field of moral conduct into sin and no sin, and call the latter the field of liberty. But most people who take the division as their starting point, and get the persuasion that outside the exact limits of sin they are free to do as they like, will soon find themselves immersed in moral dangers so serious that their whole character and future destiny is jeopardised. A man needs to hedge himself round with quite a number of safeguards, in matters in which he is theologically free. Hence unless in some way or other you can introduce some principle of *obligatory* self-restraint beyond the limits of specific sin, you will soon find out that "liberty" is a very dangerous idea to get enamoured of, and capable of proving a serious snare for souls.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART VII. LIBERTY AND RESTRAINT.

NEXT day there was quite a chorus of students asking Herr Schneebels to "tell us all about liberty"; so Herr Schneebels thus began :—

Liberty is the loudest and most often shouted watchword of our day, and the most cherished treasure of the world around us; liberty from all sorts of bondages under which our predecessors were supposed to have groaned, and from which the nineteenth century has

gradually set itself free. Our popular apologists often take the line of replying that "liberty without restraints is no longer liberty but licence, and that true liberty does not mean liberty to do what you like, but to do what is right." But this is not the right way of putting it. If they were to say that liberty without restraint easily degenerates into licence all would be well; or that liberty is a good only so far as men use it to do right, no one could quarrel with them. But expressed in the way I have quoted, it is not only false in philosophy but is calculated to give our case away.

The essential idea of liberty is self-determination, no matter in what direction. It is the exercise of the free-will doing *this* when it could, if it so preferred, do something else, or do nothing at all.

No, what these zealous but indiscreet apologists really want to say is that liberty, however good in itself as an attribute of being, ceases practically to be a good as soon as it is used for evil purposes. In other words, liberty is a prerogative excellent in itself, but capable of being misused, and therefore needing certain restraints so as to keep it within wholesome lines. On such a basis one can think and talk soundly and convincingly on the subject.

A man who is altogether free from restraints from without may of course exercise self-restraint from within. That is to say, among all the different impulses which come to him, he may exercise his liberty soundly by following those which are good and avoiding those which are hurtful. But this self-restraint is in itself an exercise of liberty, just as the deliberate following of every impulse, good or bad, would be an exercise of liberty.

COERCION AND NECESSITY.

Philosophers distinguish two restraints on liberty: coercion from without, and necessity from within.

Every man is coerced from without in thousands of ways, not by any positive force but by the impossibility of doing all that he might wish to do. No man can jump over St. Paul's dome, or walk across the Thames; no man can carry his house on his back. There is a big list of crimes which Robinson Crusoe could not commit if he tried. So long as he was alone on his island he could neither steal, nor kill, nor commit adultery, or bear false witness against his neighbour. Even in ordinary life people are saved from the possibility of endless sins because the opportunity or occasion never comes in their way. The same with the make-up of a man's temperament. People go through life incapable of various sins and vices, because there exists in them no passion, no inclination impelling them in those directions.

This we may call the field of negative coercion; the impossibility of doing things because either the object or the disposition is absent. Positive coercion can be absolute or direct, if for example a policeman hand-cuffs you and locks you up in jail. But generally it is of the indirect or dissuasive order, for instance police laws which effectively quench all practical wish to do the things forbidden because of the disgrace or penalty attached to them. The commandments of God can have a similar morally coercive effect. There are good people in the world (not necessarily great saints) who would never dream of doing anything which they knew clearly to be wrong. It would never enter into the horizon of their mind to conceive such a thing possible; their sins being always sins of inadvertence or weakness. Such individuals practically never have to exercise the choice between a good and a bad use of their free will.

We are getting very near to internal necessity here. Internal necessity means something in the very constitu-

tion of the mind and will which renders certain kinds of choice impossible. Thus God, the supreme freedom, can will everything that is not intrinsically impossible, that is self-contradictory and cancelling, such as a square circle. But he can also never will evil, because being himself the absolute good, evil is a negation of himself. The Blessed in heaven cannot will evil for another reason. Evil is never willed for its own sake, but only for sake of some good which is identified with it. But the Blessed are so satisfied with the good they have got that it would be impossible for them to desire anything else. Hence an object mixed up with evil could never appeal to them.

In man under earthly conditions it is just as easy to will evil as to will good. There exist in the world as many objects which ought not to be willed, as there are objects which ought to be willed. What a man needs is a mind so habitually bent on good that the attractions of evil only get a remote chance with him. Even if they do get a footing in his imagination or feelings, he has by steady practice disciplined himself in such a way as to make the right decision short and sharp.

SELF-DISCIPLINE.

There do exist people in the world who seem to be *animae naturaliter bonae*—freaks of nature on the lovely side, one might call them. I have come across one or two specimens (said Herr Schneebels) and the thought that struck me was: "Suppose one could inject into that placid nature one strong touch of vicious passion; what would be the result? There might be a complete shrinking away from the evil thing, or there might be an immediate moral collapse. It is difficult to expect anything like character ready for emergencies in such a subject, just

because there has been no practice in meeting emergencies, no struggle for self-mastery against the rebellious forces of the lower man.

The ordinary human being one comes across is quite different. Every man has his share of moral problems to face, some in greater, some in lesser degree. In one the vicious tendency is strictly departmental; one single weakness, one single propensity. Others seem to be made up of vicious tendencies; there is hardly a single passion, vice or sin for which no inclination is felt.

But whatever the variety, this is the thing I am coming to. There are very few men to whom self-mastery is habitual by nature. All the tendency is the other way. To follow each impulse as it comes, is the instinct of childhood; which will be kept up through later life unless self-control is acquired by regular and hard practice. In other words, the only way to learn to use liberty properly is a constant submission to the discipline of law.

That is what the clumsy apologists I have already referred to really mean under cover of their fallacious talk about "real liberty being the liberty to do right, and not the liberty to do wrong." A man who is not constantly disciplining himself gets into the habit of doing just what takes his fancy, every time. The result is he gets off his guard, and gradually ceases to exercise his liberty at all. For liberty is essentially a deliberate free choice; to do this or that with the full consciousness of the alternative, namely the power to act the contrary way, or else not to act at all. A man who habitually follows his passing impulses really loses the habit of choice. He gives up deliberating, and merely obeys the sensitive or emotional force that impinges upon him. He is "doing what he likes," but he is not doing it by choice. He is doing it just because he feels an inclination

moving him that way, and so yields to it, and throws himself into it without reflection and without deliberation. At the most it is the *delectatio victrix*, the stronger motive prevailing mechanically according to the resolution of forces. His action is hardly a human action (actus deliberatus cum cognitione finis) but is almost an *actus hominis* like the "fricare barbam" of the scholastics.

That is just what I am cautioning you against when I speak of the snare of liberty. Liberty can only be used safely and well so far as a man is largely dominated by law dictating to him that he ought to do this and he ought not to do that. The more of a man's life is covered by law the more self-discipline is he practising, and the better will he use his liberty in other parts of his life which are not dominated by law.

THE TWO KINDS OF LAW.

One consideration which ought to reconcile any man to the idea of submitting to law is the fact that we cannot escape law anyhow. If the law is not of our own election for the *restraint* of liberty, it will be another law, not of our election which will sooner or later lead to the *extinction* of our liberty. St. Paul graphically describes this duality of laws in the following terms :—

"We know that the law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work I understand not. For I do not a good which I will ; but the evil which I hate, that I do. For to will is present with me ; but to accomplish that which is good I find not.

"For I am delighted with the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me to the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?"

THE CHAPTER EXPLAINED.

We can explain the whole of the chapter as follows: So long as a man is following his impulses without restraint and responsibility, his way is clear and easy. It is the path of least resistance; in fact no resistance at all. But as soon as the idea of the moral law impresses itself, all conduct has to be regulated by a strictly defined code; and on every occasion a man has to make a deliberate judgment on the moral quality of his acts, and a deliberate choice whether to act this way or that, or whether to act at all. In any case no man can escape the dominion of law. Either it must be the law of instinct, impulse and passion, or the law of reason enlightened by grace, which is in the essential constituent of the Christian mind. If the Christian law is adopted, it means the exercise of choice every time, and therefore the exercise of liberty—for liberty essentially consists in self-determination by choice. If the Christian law is discarded it does not follow that a man is emancipating himself from law and extending liberty. On the contrary he becomes the subject of the "law of the members" which, if not an absolute coercion, is at least a force pushing and driving a man in various directions with such strength and impetus that it requires very great efforts to resist.

Hence it is that the relinquishment of the moral law in favour of liberty, as it is called, is not really an enhancement of liberty but a curtailment of it—just because it is an abandonment of deliberative choice. The sensual man simply says "I do what I like." But what he likes is dictated to him by his feelings, impulses and passions; and his following of such feelings, impulses, and passions is not a free determination from within but a forced determination from without——.

that is, a determination by the senses which suggest objects of attraction and excite the desire to pursue them. It comes to this: A man who throws off the restraints of rational law merely puts himself into the hands of irrational law; and instead of commanding himself in his actions, abandons himself to a supine obedience to whatever impulses impinge upon him. The sensuous, licentious man, in short, is not exercising his free will but has abandoned its use, and allows it to atrophy. His actions are no longer determined by deliberate calculations in the light of right and wrong, but are determined by impulses which he simply gives way to and does not even profess to control.

THE EXCELLENCE OF FREE ACTS.

Now (said Herr Schneebels) let us see how far we have got. We have got so far as to realise that liberty consists in the deliberate exercise of choice, instead of acting either mechanically through custom, or subserviently under impulse. Each act of deliberate free choice is an exercise of intellect and will in the highest order. It is not only the expression of character *par excellence*, but is the building up of the structure of further character. Only deliberate free acts are really in the full sense *our own* acts; acts for which we are entirely responsible because they are a pure and simple creation of our own, and acts which if good are absolutely to our credit.

Thus, to return to those people who are good by nature, as we call it, it is quite possible that they are really exercising very little moral activity. They are good because they were made so; and whatever credit there is attached to their goodness is due rather to their born constitution than to their autonomous selves. They are beautiful objects in nature, one might say, but that is all. Take on the other hand the man who, no matter

whether his inclinations are good or bad, stands master of himself; surveys every impulse and motive which comes before him, estimates its moral value, and out of the root-principle of "always doing the right thing," deliberately and consciously chooses what act he will perform, with full knowledge of the import of the act and its consequences. That is man at the height of his self-development according to the type of a rational being. He is not good merely because he feels inclined to be good, but because he realises that it is right and proper to be good; that thereby he is fulfilling his duties to God, his neighbour and himself, and conducting his life as God Almighty wishes him to conduct it.

I quite admit that the exercise of reflex free action can be pushed so far as to become unnatural or affected or self-conscious, so as to mar the buoyant spontaneousness which is the great charm of a human being as such. But this does not prevent us from realising the underlying principles of the rational life, and shaping ourselves in that direction more than heretofore in order to build up our character more solidly.

A MIDDLE ZONE.

The last point I want to come to (said Herr Schneebels) is a practical one, very important for the direction of souls. Although it is a somewhat baffling subject to treat of, I want you to realise, in all your dealings with other souls, that between the narrow range of what is specifically and absolutely forbidden (which is sin) and the altogether free and optional field of virtues usually called the counsels of perfection, there is a middle zone, indefinite in its outlines and varying with every individual, of *obligation* which does not bind under sin through any specific commandment, but which is incumbent practically upon the individual man as a necessity of

his own individual nature, if he is to go through life on safe and sound lines, and escape the snares around him, which will weaken his character and diminish his self-mastery, and open the door to tendencies which are calculated to issue in general demoralisation, and put him in imminent peril of sin and ruin.

It is a commonplace of devotional literature to say that a man who simply aims at avoiding mortal sin will not succeed in avoiding it; that a man who merely aims at strictly binding duty will not really fulfil all his duty; that you must aim higher than your mark if you wish to hit it; that people who do not aim at going forward will find themselves going back, etc. In other words, outside the range of strictly specified moral obligations capable of being universally formulated as laws or commandments, there are obligations no less binding on the individual (though not specifically binding under sin and punishment); and unless a man embraces and faithfully adheres to these, he must inevitably find himself failing even in those minimal essentials which it is the special business of casuistry to dissect.

AN INSTANCE IN POINT.

Take an instance already referred to yesterday. It is quite true theologically to say that gambling is in itself an innocent amusement, and that anybody may indulge in it without the least reproach of conscience; and there are some persons who find gambling (as *they* practice it) the innocent bit of fun here described. But sad experience shows that most people, when they have once started gambling, feel a sort of fascination for it which unbalances their character, and it requires a tremendous amount of self-restraint to prevent themselves from running amok. To treat a penitent in an off manner by telling him that "gambling is no sin in itself, and only

becomes sinful if it leads to some injustice or breach of duty" is miserably inadequate book-work, drawn from mere casuistry; and the effect is likely to be most injurious. What you have to do instead is to take the psychological view of the case, and say "While admitting that in the pure abstract gambling is not a sin, yet there is something so subtle and seductive about it that in many cases it becomes a dangerous and demoralising thing to indulge in. But anything which is dangerous and demoralising has the taint of sin on it, even though we cannot put our finger on the taint, and diagnose it, and reduce it to a specific breach of the formulated code. Hence it can become a strict moral obligation on the part of the individual to abstain altogether from an indulgence which in his case becomes sinful. The dry way of saying this is, of course, to refer to the theology of "remote and proximate occasions of sin." But original as it may seem, I believe (concluded Herr Schneebels) we can get down to something deeper than mere occasions. We can find in such cases a *sinfulness* which is not specifically *sin* and yet has all the taint of sin on it—which is not merely a matter of counsel or advice, but of strict obligation in the individual case to shun as sin.

The matter is too subtle (concluded Herr Schneebels) to get quite clear in one talk. But if you young men will put as much intellectual acumen into thinking critically on what I have said, as you are putting into your casuistical cases, your thoughts may help me to get the thing clearer next time.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART VIII. PRECEPTS AND COUNSELS.

NEXT day the students were ready with their criticisms, and Dawson was the first to put in his word. "You spoke yesterday (he said) of some kind of middle zone between the precepts and the counsels; a zone of obligation beyond the range of specific sin, and yet apparently binding as duty. I don't understand that, (he continued). I always thought that the distinction between moral restraint and full liberty was a clear one, and that whatever involved sin was under precept, and everything else was mere counsel."

"I am glad you have put your finger on that point (answered Herr Schneebels). I hope I shall not shock you if I confess that the distinction between precepts and counsels has always seemed to me a defective and inadequate distinction, and one which (unless considerably qualified) is calculated to give a very misleading impression. The more one thinks over it, the more does one see the necessity of a middle zone; and the only difficulty is how to define it. It is something much more bound up with psychology than with law; and in fact it seems to lie altogether outside the cognizance of law—purely such."

"But if it is outside the range of law how can it possibly be an obligation?" asked Watson. "For surely obligation is nothing else but the moral necessity of obeying a law."

"Excuse me, replied Herr Schneebels. When I say law I am looking at law from the forensic or legalistic point of view—as it is treated in moral theology, or rather in casuistry. As soon as you look at morality from the psychological aspect things are quite different."

"But what," asked Dawson, "has psychology to do with obligations? I thought it was only concerned with functions."

MORALITY AS A FUNCTION.

"True," replied Herr Schneebels. "But you must not forget that morality itself is a function. It is the positing of mental and volitional acts, without which there would be no morality at all. Conscience itself is a function, so is deliberation, so is consent, so is choice, so is the execution of acts. These functions, in which moral conduct essentially consists, are not only capable of inter-action among themselves, but they are capable of being impinged upon by other functions such as imagination, feeling, desire, fear, dislike and the rest. The proper regulation of moral conduct involves an immense amount of adjustment, and of self-management, distributed over all these interacting functions and their relations to each other. In addition there is the whole apparatus of inspirations, aspirations, stimulations and depressions; another set of functions which play an important part in the determination of one's life. The moral law regarded as a legalistic code is a mere programme of action and inaction; what is called the *norm* of morality. The question how a man will behave when confronted with that code on the one hand, and the complicated dynamic of his functionings on the other, means something more than a mere sharp-cut decision to obey or disobey the law.

"No, what I say is this. If we regard the fulfilment of the law by action as the end, and the management of our own functionings in presence of the law as the means, you will see at once that a man is not only bound to make the final and absolute decision to obey the law. In order to do this he is bound to enlist the helps which lie

within him, and to dispose of the hindrances which present themselves within him, in order to clear his path to the right decision, and to carry out the decision when made. Now it is a maxim that he who is bound to will the end is bound also to will the means. Hence the conclusion I am aiming at, namely, that besides the strictly legal obligation to avoid sin, a man is under a psychological obligation to adopt the means which will enable him to avoid sin.

"In this way the legal obligation to avoid a certain sin will carry with it half a dozen obligations of self-management in various direction in order to carry out that legal obligation. And yet it cannot be said that these acts of self-management are binding by force of any specific law, nor does failure to perform these acts of self-management involve any specific sin in the failure itself. The psychological obligations are not *propter se* but *propter aliud*, namely, they are necessary as means to the obligatory end, and as such become obligatory in themselves, even though not under specific sin.

"But is this anything more than the ordinary doctrine of avoiding the occasions of sin?" asked Watson.

"Perhaps not," replied Herr Schneebels. I am convinced myself that I am really introducing nothing new. But I am certainly putting it in a new way. Avoiding occasions of sin is a very inadequate way of expressing the idea, though it comes in practice to the same thing. Avoiding the occasions of sin merely expresses the negative idea of getting out of the way of some object "cujus presentia aliquid fit." What we want is something far deeper, namely, the adoption of positive means to the end. This brings us at once into the psychology of morals; and that is a subject which, I am afraid, is practically so far an unworked field. I

have never yet come across any book, treatise or essay covering the ground which we are trying to cover now. If such a book exists I should be glad to hear of it. It might save one a deal of laborious thinking."

DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.

"Then how do you intend to work out the subject ?" asked Dawson.

Herr Schneebels replied : "To work it out adequately we should have to divide it into two parts, parallel and complimentary to each other. The first would deal with the idea of the middle zone in relation to sin, looking downwards so to speak ; and the other would deal with the same idea in relation to virtue, perfection or the ideal, thus looking upwards. For sake of clearness we must take one at a time, and of the two perhaps the downward aspect is the easiest, especially as it is that aspect we are actually engaged upon just now."

"What then is precisely the thesis ?" asked Watson.

"The thesis is this," replied Herr Schneebels. First, that the distinction between specific precepts of law binding under sin, and "the counsels of perfection" is inadequate. In between there lies a zone of moral obligations not binding under specific sin in the act itself, but binding nevertheless under strict obligation so that their non-fulfilment is sinful even though not constituting a breach of any specific precept of law."

"I don't see that" said Dawson. "The very idea of obligation is the binding force of a moral law." Surely you don't mean to say that the code which we comprehensively hang up on the row of pegs called the "ten commandments" (*plus* the precepts of the Church) is incomplete ? If so, I should like you to tell me exactly what is left out."

Herr Schneebels replied :—

"Not so fast. Does not your moral theology include the obligation of avoiding the occasions of sin, and the principle of responsibility for sin *in causa* ? The occasions of sin are not sins in themselves, nor are the causes of sin, sins in themselves ; and yet you put both under a universal obligation. Suppose a man tolerates an occasion of sin, and falls in consequence, you specify the sin by what actually happens. But suppose the man does not actually fall, you still consider him guilty of a breach of duty in not avoiding the occasion. In the same way if a man does something which might cause sin, but the sin itself happens not to come off, you still consider that he has failed in an obligation, although you do not accuse him of specific sin just because the specific sin did not take place.

"That is because of the risk he has run" remarked Dawson.

"Very well" said Herr Schneebels. "So you admit that there is a strict obligation of avoiding risks of sin, even though they do not result in sin. But there is no specific commandment saying : 'Thou shalt avoid all risks of sin under pain of sin.' And no man would be sent to hell for not avoiding risks of sin.

"In short the obligation cannot be arrived at by forensic means. The law simply specifies the thing forbidden, and asks whether the accused has done it or not. It does not ask whether the accused has run risks of doing it. As soon as you get into psychology a new aspect of the case arises. A man's proper attitude towards sin must be such that he is willing to run no risks. He must take the safe course. It is a strict obligation to take the safe course—prudently and not meticulously estimated, of course ; and yet if he does not take the safe course but

runs risks, the law cannot indict him so long as the risk does not issue in the actual committal of the sins which are risked.

"That is a thing that has often puzzled me," said Beesley. "I have often wondered whether the specific sins are the only sins ; whether there is not something which one might call generic sin, or better, some kind of very real sinfulness which is not definitely sin. St. Ignatius tells us that to deliberate about a mortal sin is in itself a mortal sin, although the sin is not committed, or even decided upon. This seems to mean that an attitude of *indifference to sin* is sinful. Suppose a man to be in a frame of mind which is expressible thus : "I am not concerned whether I commit sin or not." Such an attitude, it seems to me, would be sinful in its very nature. Any one who loves God must positively hate sin—I don't mean excitedly of course, but calmly and as an attitude of mind. He must always be able to say to myself : 'I am on God's side against sin.' Don't you think we can find some clue to the 'middle zone' here ?"

Herr Schneebels replied : "I think that quite a luminous idea. The man who tolerates an occasion of sin, when he feels in conscience that he ought to avoid it, does not necessarily wish to commit the sin, nor does he necessarily take complacency in the idea of the sin. But at any rate he knows the risk, and in not bestirring himself against it he is showing an indifference to sin which is inconsistent to a right attitude towards God. But a right attitude towards God is of absolute obligation ; and a man who lets himself get out of a right attitude towards God is, one might say, in a *sinful attitude of mind*, even if it does not yet issue in specific sin.

"A bit intangible," remarked Dawson.

"True," said Herr Schneebels; "but there is a good deal of intangibility in most fundamental problems; and I don't think that ought to discourage us. With twenty keen brains at work together, I think we may soon gradually get things clearer. At any rate, however baffling the thing seems, I suppose you feel that there is something behind it?"

INDETERMINATE VIRTUES AND VICES.

"Yes," said Beesley. "The other day I was reading Watkins' essay on what he called "Indeterminate Virtues and Vices." His whole essay is one protest against the inadequacy of our traditional treatment of moral theology.* He wants it to include all human acts whether good or bad, and throws himself into the psychological side of the subject. He protests against confining moral duty to specific acts, and wishes to include attitudes of mind both positive and negative; and this is where he brings in his "Indeterminate Virtues and Vices."

Herr Schneebels replied: "Yes, I have read the essay, and only regret that it is too short. He throws out an immense number of helpful hints. For instance where he discusses "imperfections" he distinguishes negative imperfections from positive imperfections, and in these latter he finds a taint of sinfulness so far as they are realised and acquiesced in. He qualifies this by confining it to imperfections which involve a deviation, however

* In passing we may remark that Father Vermeersch has just published a volume tentatively working on the same lines as are here being discussed. From the reviews we gather that he protests against the narrow conception of moral theology as merely concerned with law and sin and includes consilia or the positive exercise of the virtues—in short all human acts good or bad which have a moral quality. He also we believe pleads for the greater use of psychology as complimentary to the legalistic view of moralists. We look forward with interest to being able to read his book.—ED. EX.

small, from the straight line between the soul and God. Such deviations he likens to a hyperbolic or parabolic curve (I am too rusty in mathematics to remember which)—a curve which begins by receding from a line, but will never reach a certain parallel line, however far prolonged, but can easily be made to reach that line by the smallest disturbing force. That is his happy way of picturing a kind of sinfulness which never may actually become sin; but the slightest interposition of a new disturbing force may turn it into sin."

"What a jolly idea," exclaimed Hawkins. "I must note that down."

"Well," said Herr Schneebels. "I fancy if we pursue the idea of indeterminate virtues and vices we may find that it will help us to what we want, and we may end in turning the indeterminate into the determinate."

"Unless we do that I shall not be satisfied," said Dawson. "I don't like anything indeterminate. It makes me feel like groping my way in a London fog."

"I think we can find a better name," said Herr Schneebels. "Generic will not do, because that is definitely divisible into the specific. But we might try the terms 'fundamental' or 'transcendental,' or perhaps both together."

FUNDAMENTAL, NOT INDETERMINATE.

"Let me recall the first definition in Ethics that the fundamental rule of moral conduct is: *Malum evidandum, bonum faciendum.* All virtuous acts are a mere specification of the *bonum faciendum*, and all sins are a specification of the *malum evidandum.* The rule is not indefinite in the least; it is only comprehensive, or generic, or fundamental. Some ethicists prefer the rule: *Dictamen rationis sequendum est*, and think that

covers both members and is more fundamental still; and so it is. If in response for a demand for moral instruction I were to tell my disciple: "Be reasonable in all your acts," he would think it very vague, very undeterminate; and yet to the philosophical mind it is absolutely clear and definite. The only question which remains is this: Whether *every* unreasonable act is therefore sinful? I fancy in strict philosophy we should have to say 'yes,' provided it was deliberate and against a positive dictate of reason. We can illustrate this by the instance of *idle words*, which St. Ignatius defines as words which do no good, and are not intended to do any good. Even if the words merely relieve one's pent-up inclination to talk they cease to be idle words, for they are at least meant to do that much good. So with unreasonable acts such as throwing sovereigns into the sea out of sheer impulse to do something foolish. A man might excuse himself by saying that he was rich, and could afford it, and it gave him amusement; but I think one could bring home to him a certain sinfulness in the act, and we might even reduce it to a specific sin of waste.

"Therefore, strictly speaking, I think we can say that there is a *ratio peccaminosa* in every act recognised as unreasonable and yet deliberately done; and this shows how far we have got outside the traditional range of moral theology. There is no express law of God: 'Thou shalt be reasonable in all thy acts.' And yet to be unreasonable is contrary to the rational nature, and is an *actus cadens super indebitam materiam.*"

"I am afraid we should be giving good people a great deal to get scruples over, if we began to teach them such a doctrine" remarked Dawson.

"True," replied Herr Schneebels. "But as casuistry is not meant to be put into the hands of the man in the

street, so neither is this high philosophy which we are discussing."

"It seems to me a distinction is needed" said the usually silent Quinley. "There is nothing sinful in unreasonableness in indifferent matters which are non-moral so to speak. For instance what is there sinful in my deliberately learning the multiplication table wrong?

"Quite right Quinley," said Herr Schneebels. "We don't want to push things to extremes. Let us confine ourselves to this position. What we want to find is some *ratio peccaminosa* or sinfulness lying outside the strict limits of specific sin. We will look for it only in those attitudes of mind which mean a turning away from the straight line between the soul and God; some deviation from the right relation, which in itself does not embody a specific sin, but tends either to issue in sin, or to put a man in a disposition which will make him less prepared to withstand temptation."

"That seems pretty safe," said Dawson.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART IX. LAW AND PSYCHOLOGY.

An adequate covering of the ground of moral conduct is quite impossible without psychology, and this is becoming a more and more recognised need. Taking a survey of present inadequacies, we begin with the *secular law* which limits itself to external actions outraging a specified code of prohibitions. *De internis non curat praetor.* There may be thousands of men in the country whose dispositions are all towards crime of various sorts. They may not only feel a disposition, but

may cherish it into a desire, and may even work out possible schemes of crime ready to be put into execution as soon as an opportunity occurs or a deterrent is removed. And yet in the eyes of the law they remain law-abiding citizens. It is only the things done and proved to be done, that fall under the cognisance of the law. The programme may extend itself to attempted crimes, and conspiracy to commit crimes, or even to rash acts calculated to bring about certain objectionable results. But here again everything falls on the thing done, and never on the mere desire, wish or intention to do it.

ETHICS AND MORAL THEOLOGY.

Ethics and moral theology go further, and extend to internal acts. The professor who taught me my ethics, when he came to the chapter on human acts said: "This is the most important chapter in the book. It is the whole of ethics; for ethics is concerned with human acts, and therefore everything depends on a clear grasp as to what is and what is not a human act. Human acts are deliberate acts done with a knowledge of their end—end here meaning the change which the act produces either in self, or in relation to others or to God. A human act, being deliberate, must also be free. It is the autonomous creation of the human will, an absolute act of self-determination. If the deliberation is imperfect, if the freedom is impeded, if the realisation of the import of the act is obscure or mistaken, all these things interfere with the integrity of the human act, though it still remains in substance human. All other acts, which are performed outside the pure intellect and pure will, are not human acts, though they are acts performed by *one who is a man*. They are acts of the sensitive nature, common with the animals, and could just as well be performed by

an animal. At the same time the vigilant intellect is cognisant of these sensitive activities, and can estimate their tendency. And if their tendency is towards something which reason and conscience condemns, it is the duty of the intellect to realise the end of such activities, as forbidden or wrong; and for the will to step in and suppress them. The act of suppression by the will is a human act, because it is deliberate with knowledge of the end. If on the other hand the intellect welcomes these sensitive activities, and wishes to let them pursue their course, no matter the evil result; in that case the rational man becomes responsible for these lower activities, and commits a sin either by abstaining from a human act of suppression when it is obligatory (sin of omission) or by positively throwing the will into the current of the sensitive activity, thus deliberately willing the result."

In this way moral theology covers the whole field of human acts, so far as they are definite acts; but it does not usually go further and enter into psychical dispositions, tendencies and attitudes of mind, so long as these lie in the latent stage, and do not issue in human acts. At the most it alludes to them as predisposing causes, and leaves the subject to the specialist in psychology.

Moral theology, moreover, does not concentrate upon all human acts, but only with those which have moral implications—those which are either commanded or forbidden, and bring a man into reckoning with the law. The moral law extends over a series of acts or classes of acts which can be specified as a transgression of this or that specific law; and when that list has been gone over, its departmental work is done. But this departmental work is of a forensic nature. It looks only to human acts actually posited, though it includes internal acts such

as deliberate complacency, consent, desire, intention, and also all conscious abstention from internal acts such as detestation, dissent, aversion, repudiation, which it is under the circumstances the duty of the soul to elicit.

Hence there still remains that wide field of predisposition which we are making a special study of. The existence of these is recognised in the system, and alluded to in a general sort of way when we are told of the duty of avoiding occasions of sin, or of responsibility for sins *in causa*, etc. But beyond merely stating this general obligation, moral theology leaves that subject alone. The reason is because of the subjective and relative nature of these things, which pertain not to the direct and circumscribed objectivities of positive law, but to the fundamentals of psychology—and other fundamentals too, as we have seen.

That is why we stand in need of a new department of theological science, and that is *the psychology of ethics and morals;* going down to the fundamental relations of the soul to God, and the fundamental roots and springs of human vitality.

The need is obvious (said Herr Schneebels); and if I had as inordinate a love of writing as I have of talking, I think I should try to tackle the subject to-morrow. The materials are ready to hand; all needed is to get them in order, and put them down on paper.

INADEQUACY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The result of what we have come to (said Herr Schneebels) is the inadequacy of the ten commandments as an exposition of the whole moral field. Originally the ten commandments were delivered to a crude archaic tribe, barely emerging from the pagan savagery in which it was immersed. They were directed against a few of the greatest moral evils of the environment, to which the

chosen people were prone: idolatry, murder, theft, adultery, perjury, greed for other people's goods. The general teaching of Moses went far beyond this. When Christ came he developed the teaching still further, and gave us a complete code embodying the highest and most perfect principles. The Church's moral teaching, therefore was far more comprehensive than the ten commandments. But the ten commandments provided a set of convenient headings, and ultimately were adopted as so many pegs on which the whole Christian code could be hung. Everything connected directly with God was brought under the first three commandments; everything connected with the principle of authority was brought under the fourth; everything which touched on security of life, limb and person fell under the heading of murder; everything which touched on rights of property was brought under the head of theft, and so on. To a looker on the arrangement appears clumsy, but everybody is used to it, and with a certain amount of ingenuity everything has been made to fit in, as regards specific moral acts.

But even now, there remains a good deal to be accounted for, *viz.*, moral obligations of a transcendental kind such as we have been discussing. No one questions these obligations to be real, but at the same time they refuse to submit to codification, just because they are concerned not so much with acts as with attitudes and dispositions of soul. Such dispositions are not specifically sins, but they are sinful in tendency, and calculated to issue in specific sins if cherished. Nay in many cases the mere cherishing of them instead of suppressing them can become sin, as soon as they are deliberately entertained. The same with attitudes of mind, which only develop into specific sins when reduced to action. But

they too become sinful as soon as they are adverted to and not corrected ; and they are sinful precisely because they embody a deviation from the right relations which ought to subsist habitually and permanently between the soul and God.

LIST OF DISPOSITIONS.

Perhaps we are advanced far enough (said Herr Schneebels) to draw up a tentative list. I have jotted down some dispositions and attitudes which are clearly sinful, because clearly tending away from God and towards sin.

(1) A disposition towards loftiness and independence of mind which can easily blossom into arrogance and pride, or disobedience to authority.

(2) A disposition towards laziness, which can easily result in indifference to God and to duty, and neglect of religion or of various obligations.

(3) A disposition of touchiness and irritability which can easily evolve into anger, hatred, violence and injustice.

(4) A disposition towards sense-pleasure which can easily emerge into gluttony or lust or the shirking of disagreeable duty.

(5) A love of pleasure and amusement which becomes a fascination, deadens my satisfaction in serious employments, and gives me a distaste for steady work or routine duty.

(6) A fondness for the sensationalism of excitement whether in mind or body, enslaving the soul to the fascinations of the theatre, the race course, the gambling table, etc.

As soon as a man becomes conscious of these dispositions, his conscience tells him that they are wrong. It

becomes his duty to watch over them, discourage them, and suppress them ; or at least to be on his guard not to allow them to get a strong hold on him, and influence his will in the direction of the sin to which they tend. To advert to their existence and consciously to acquiesce in them, or welcome and cherish them, turns the disposition into an *attitude of mind* which is inherently sinful, and constitutes a definite breach of moral duty. But the sinfulness is not necessarily of a specific nature, that is, it need not involve a positive bent of the will towards the kind of sin involved. It may be nothing more than a negative attitude of indifference to the risks of sin, or an indifference to the right attitude of the soul towards God. In that case the sinfulness is either generic or transcendental. It lies in the very foundations of the moral self. If we wish to reduce the sinfulness to a definition, we have to fall back on something very radical indeed, for instance the root-maxim of ethics : *malum evitandum, bonum faciendum*" or even "dictamen rationis sequendum est." Psychologically on the other hand, we would define it as an *inordinate affection* or a conscious and sanctioned deviation of the mind from the straight line which it is our duty to maintain between our soul and God.

CAUSES OF DEGENERATION.

Any one who has been fed merely on such ideas as "Mortal sin incurs hell, venial sin incurs purgatory," and the notion that "unless you can bring the matter under the ten commandments there is no sin at all, and everything else is free."—People, I say, who have just caught this obvious outline of moral doctrine will be inclined to despise everything we have been discussing as mere academic subtlety, or scholastic web-spinnings, or light and airy nothings. But such people are missing

entirely the profound problem of the moral life; the ulterior deep-rooted causes at work far below the surface, which issues in so many baffling experiences. We come across young men or young women who were very models of all that was innocent and good during the whole of their school career, and even pinks of propriety for the earlier years of their life in the world; and yet when we hear of them next time they have gone utterly to the dogs, and seem to have become irreclaimably evil. The key to each particular instance of demoralisation we may never find. But at least we are driven to reflect on the deeply underlying roots of moral character, in which the starting point for such degeneration has probably been lurking from very early years, in the form of some innate disposition of the soul not checked, or some crooked attitude of mind which has not been set right, and has become fixed as habitual—some deordination which escaped discipline just because it did not display itself as specific sin. To realise the existence of this underlying stratum in the moral life, in the region which the moderns would wish to call the "sub-conscious," is at least a very important thing for all who have to undertake the direction of souls—whose alertness to recognise delicate signs of deordination may sometimes enable them to nip the evil in the bud, and put the disciple on the *qui vive* to detect and eradicate the subtle disorder before it takes deep root and fixes itself in the soul. When once fixed it will intensify and grow till it blossoms out not only into specific sins, but into total degeneration and demoralisation.

LIST OF ATTITUDES OF MIND.

"But (said Herr Schneebels) besides a list of sinful *dispositions* I have to cover the ground again with a list of attitudes of mind which are tendentially sinful."

"How do you distinguish between dispositions and attitudes of mind?" asked Beesley.

"By *dispositions* I mean something psychic, pertaining to the sensitive part of the soul; feelings or emotions which betray the existence of passions lying latent underneath and are a prelude to the excitation of them. By *attitudes of mind* I mean something purely intellectual; a certain way of viewing things which tends to have an influence on the bent of the will.

These attitudes of mind can subsist in the positive or in the negative state. A negative attitude is practically a state of indifference or apathy. The positive stage is reached as soon the state of mind is realised and is consciously acquiesced in or sanctioned, or at least accepted with complacency instead of being repudiated.

(1) An attitude of indifference towards God, either personally or in relation to duty. An indifference whether my attitude is exactly right or adequate, or whether it falls short of what it should be—so long as I don't actually give him up, or run the risk of hell.

(2) An attitude of indifference to the consequences of my actions, whether they cause evil to others or not, whether they tend to lower the standard of those around me, whether they serve as occasions of sin to others; a lack of the sense of responsibility for sin *in causa*.

(3) An attitude of indifference as to the dangers or risks of sin. I don't want to go wrong, of course, but I don't feel any disposition to be alert against danger so as to make myself safe; this is equivalent to not avoiding the occasions of sin.

(4) A love of freedom; a disposition to reduce restraints on liberty to the minimum; that is, I won't submit myself to restraints except those which are absolutely binding. I admit the law that I must not commit mortal

sin, even that I must avoid fully deliberate venial sin. But for the rest, I am free and want to do as I like. If gambling is not in itself a sin I am determined to gamble. If moderate drinking is not a sin in itself I am going to have my drink. You tell me that in my particular case these indulgences have a fascination by which I am in great danger of becoming enthralled. Never mind, as soon as the enthrallment proves itself to be a fact I am ready to draw back. But till then I am going to follow my bent.

(5) A certain pride of "manliness" which says: I know that reading such books tends to shake my faith; reading such other books tends to lower my moral sense; seeing this or that play or picture stirs me in a way calculated to issue in sin. But it is cowardly and "unworthy of a man" to yield to fear. The proper thing is to face up to danger and overcome it. Other people go through these things unscathed, and why should not I? I can always draw the line when necessary.

(6) A sort of absolutism of the will; a tenacity of desire to have or to achieve whatever I set my mind and will on. This results in an absorption in the pursuit which makes me oblivious of duty towards God or man, and a determinateness of pursuit which causes me to force myself onwards by any means, right or wrong, and regardless of side-consequences.

(7) The spirit of worldliness, which in the Bible is pictured as the very enemy of God and the soul. Worldliness in its essence does not necessarily involve any specific sin, but it is essentially sinful because it eliminates God from his own universe. The spirit of the world means an outlook on life in which every earthly and temporal factor is taken into account and reckoned with. But the fundamental fact that the world, as well as ourselves,

belong to God, and have God for their first beginning and their last end, is simply ignored and cut out of the calculation. Even people whom you would call good in the broad sense, can be thoroughly worldly. For though they do not deny or ignore God altogether, they are continually making calculations and adjustments on a purely worldly basis, which leave God out of consideration, and would have to be made in quite another spirit if God were reckoned with.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART X. DEORDINATION.

"If we are agreed on that, I think we can focus down the rest of our discussion on the word *deordination*," said Herr Schneebels. "Some years ago I had the privilege of listening to a retreat given by a certain eminent Jesuit father; and it was one of his "considerations" which first set my mind working on this subject. The conference was on "Deordination." It was a wonderfully vivid description of disorder in the soul which was yet something short of actual sin. He drew the picture of a Catholic woman in high society, who was faithful to her essential duties such as going to Mass (though easily admitting excuses), going to confession occasionally, giving liberally to the church collection and the poor box, leading quite a correct life privately and publicly, not altogether neglecting prayer; and yet thoroughly worldly, out to enjoy herself to the full, making it the one great affair of her life to be a social success. One would hardly have thought that anything very dramatic could be

got out of an inspection of such a woman's soul. But Father X revealed to us a turmoil of irregular affections, aspirations, desires, vexations and disappointments, which, while leaving her free from any serious sin, displayed a soul terribly out of touch and harmony with God. The thought of death and judgment, brought home to her suddenly by an accident, filled her with terror, and put her into a state of pallid fright which was pitiful to witness. She came to realise with the suddenness of lightning what a total revolution in her whole outlook on life was necessary to put her in a fit state to die. In short she was overwhelmed with a sense of sinfulness, although free on the whole from specific sin. Although she could not think of anything for which she knew she would go to hell, she felt that she was utterly and hopelessly unfit for heaven, and deserved the direst punishment even if she did not actually incur it. That woman of fashion, concluded the lecturer, became a changed creature. And yet the change was almost entirely an interior one ; a correct attitude towards God, a correct outlook on life, which made all the difference to her inward consciousness though it involved very little change in her outward life, which had been broadly speaking correct all the time.

WHAT DEORDINATION IS.

Such, he said, is a picture of the interior life of a woman in society whom I assume to be perfectly proper in her conduct but entangled with worldliness. I purposely put aside all sin, even deliberate venial sin, and confine myself to deordination which is not sin—however easily, however inevitably in some cases, it may slide into sin. Deordination can become an approximate occasion of sin ; but as such it is only a remote occasion. It may not even be a remote occasion, and yet it is a disorder of

the soul, a positively wrong attitude sometimes, but often merely the lack of a right attitude. Its effect on the spiritual life may be direct, but it may be also only indirect; a disturbance of mind and feeling which drowns the still small voice of God, which distracts one from listening to it; which destroys the calmness necessary for devotion; a whirl of attractions and repulsions not necessarily yielded to, but felt absorbingly, so that the mind is occupied thereby and has neither time nor inclination for anything higher or better; a turmoil of likes and dislikes which pull and push this way and that, even if they are resisted and put aside; an estimate of values by worldly standards; hopes, desires, aspirations, ambition to realise those values; despair, vexation, disappointment, dispondency as soon as one fails to realise them. A drawing away from the things that are worth having to things not worth having; a disregard for things that are, a yearning for things that are not. Even if steering a true and straight course through this whirl of feelings, passions, emotions, aspirations, desires, longings, the disturbance has a fatal influence on the soul. Then a sudden check comes: a sharp reminder of the precariousness of life, of the worthlessness of the temporal and the value of the eternal; the hearing of some such home truth as "What doth it profit if a man gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul," or again, "Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God in this life and by so doing to save his soul."—Such a gentle reminder of an obvious home truth will come to some worldly soul with a shock like the sudden blast of a trumpet. And even if such a worldly soul can honestly say: "I am keeping the commandments," still, the conviction of an habitually wrong attitude of mind and soul is borne in upon consciousness. It must be awfully wrong some-

how, or else why should the thought of death and judgment give me such a start ?

THE EXERCISES ON DEORDINATION.

The most masterly treatment of deordination,* and at the same time the simplest, is that of St. Ignatius. In the *Summary of the Constitutions* the expression occurs "ab omni inordinatione custodire"; and to understand what lies at the back of this phrase one has to go back to the *Exercises*. At the very beginning we are told that the *Exercises* prepare and dispose the soul to remove all inordinate affections; and when these are removed, to seek and find the will of God. He teaches us to watch the motions of the soul, its moods and feelings such as consolations, depressions and agitations, and judge of their source, and their goodness or badness, by the effects they produce and the results they tend to. He will not trust even the best and most fervent feelings until he has tested them by their effects. In the Foundation he states simply and clearly the end of man, the goal he has to aim at. He then tells us that everything in the world is given to us to be used as a help to this end, and is to be discarded as soon as it impedes. Hence a man has to cultivate on the one hand a single-minded concentration on the end, as that which is absolutely willed and sought; and on the other hand a complete indifference to all other things, viewing them solely as so many opportunities and means by the use of which (or in some cases the avoidance of which) he can carry his direct programme into effect. The "indifference" here re-

* The word "deordination" is marked in Webster's Dictionary as obsolete, and in the passages quoted "inordination" is used instead. The Spanish: "afecciones desordenadas," brings us nearer to the word "deordination."

quired does not mean the apathy or listlessness which the word suggests, but rather an equipoise of mind like that of a balance, which is ready to be turned up or down, and is not biased in either direction. A man must be like a Field Marshal who has absolute command of his men and munitions, and with one single aim in mind, directs his forces in whatever way they will best serve his purpose. There must be no bias in favour of this regiment because his first cousin is commanding it, or against that other regiment because the son of his hereditary foe is commanding it. There must be no mere wish to show cleverness or daring or brilliance, still less any disposition to shirk difficulties or escape trouble. Such dispositions or attitudes of mind would be "deordinations," that is deviations from the straight line to the intended goal.

THE TWO STANDARDS.

St. Ignatius, too, with a remarkable anticipation of the modern psychological outlook, lays great stress on just the things, indifferent in themselves, which are the ultimate roots and sources of sin. In the meditation on the *Two Standards*, his aim is to show the tactics with which the evil one plans his campaign against the soul. The devil is far too clever to put before decent men anything so gross and obviously wrong as lust, rapine, robbery. People who are carried away by this sort of thing need no tempting, and can be safely left to themselves. The problem is not how to get hold of the bad people, but how to get hold of the good people. The only way of securing these latter is by putting before them things which are quite innocent in themselves, but which contain an attraction likely to become seductive by degrees; likely to exert a fascination which will deprive a man of the balance of his mind

and judgment, obscure his spiritual vision, and lead him gradually away from God by absorption in creatures. Therefore what the devil does is to put before men first a desire for riches, and then a desire of honours. When these desires have once got hold of the soul, there is no limit to the perverse tendencies into which the soul may be led. In other words, the real danger which the normally well-disposed soul has to be on the look out for, is not so much specific sins (which on account of their obviousness will repel him) but for subtle deviations from the right line in the depth of the soul, in the form of inordinate affections for things in themselves innocent. A simple healthy liking for such things would do no harm, and would form part of a sane and legitimate enjoyment of life. The affection becomes inordinate as soon as it becomes absorbing or fascinating ; as soon as it catches hold of the mind and introduces a bias into the will, or obscures the clearness of the mental vision, or weakens the exercise of deliberation and choice.

THREE CLASSES OF MEN.

The effect of deordination, or inordinate affection, is curiously illustrated by St. Ignatius himself in *The Three Classes of Men*. It is the case of certain ill-gotten goods, which must be cleared away before the soul can secure peace. It is not a case of downright fraud, but the goods have been acquired under some kind of inordinate motive which leaves a kind of taint on them, and the soul will not become pure till they are got rid of. The tenacity of the soul in clinging to the goods is not necessarily sinful in any positive way ; but it is an *undue* tenacity, something which interferes with the freedom of the soul from earthly ties, and thus proves a distracting influence diverting the outlook of the soul from God.

St. Ignatius pictures three men in turn; the first of whom has a kind of sentimental wish (velleity) to put things right but it does not issue in action. He bears the burden of uneasiness all his life, and feels miserable under it, but does nothing to remove it. The inordinate affection has its own way, in spite of the better mind. The second man is more ingenious and tries for a compromise; to get rid of the discomfort of the deordination and yet retain the goods. He tries therefore various ways of compensation; being particularly good in other directions, specially fervent in prayers or good works; hoping perhaps that as charity covers a multitude of sins, it will also cover this mere deordination, and smooth it over. He wants to have his cake and eat it; and only brings himself into worse complications.

The third man resolutely makes the break, and has done with it. At once the deordination and the miseries attending it are gone, and the soul is established in peace.

At this moment Beesley burst out into a sudden laugh, which seems to us altogether irrelevant.

"What's the matter Beesley?" we asked. "Is this an illustration of your inordinate affection for fun?"

"I am afraid it is" said Beesley. "While I was listening I felt a sudden swoop from the sublime to the ridiculous—I beg pardon; Go on."

"Come" said Herr Schneebels: "You might as well let us share your fun."

"Well," said Beesley: "What occurred to me was this. For the last half hour I have been tortured with a small stone in one of my boots. Every consideration of sense and reason told me to turn aside and remove it; but I felt such an inordinate affection for listening to Herr Schneebels that I could not get myself to do it. Then

it struck me: What a jolly illustration of the three classes of men."

Herr Schneebels laughed and said: "A funny illustration sometimes brings home a truth far more strikingly than a serious one. I have often endured the same torture myself through the greater part of a walk. The reason was not the charm of my companion's conversation, but sheer laziness or inertia, shirking the trouble of taking off my boots. I have gone through the first stage by nursing a weak velleity; then got to the second stage by trying to wriggle the stone into some more comfortable place; then finally got desperate, and said: 'I can't stand it any longer, here goes.' Then I would sit down, shake the boot out, and lace up again, and feel a reaction of relief which was heavenly. The only thing that puzzled me was: Why I had been such a fool as to endure it so long."

"I say," remarked Dawson, producing a note-book. "Unless Beesley claims copyright I shall use that in my next sermon. It brings the idea of deordination home to me far more clearly than all we have been talking about for these three days."

THE PUZZLE OF DEORDINATION.

"Now" said Herr Schneebels: "While the general idea of deordination seems clear enough, I find it somewhat difficult to come to a precise definition of its relation to sin. There is something wrong in it, and the point is to put one's finger on the exact nature of this wrongness. It is not enough to call it an occasion of sin, for an occasion of sin may be quite an innocent thing in itself. It is not enough to call it a cause of sin, for that again may be quite innocent in itself. What we look for is a certain intrinsic wrongness which therefore must be

sinful in its nature, even if it does not issue in any specifically sinful act.

"Perhaps the three classes of men will help us to find what we want. Their ten thousand ducats had not been stolen; but they had been required "not purely and duely for the love of God"; and they find themselves weighed with an impediment to that love arising from their affection for, or attachment to the money. You cannot find any specific sin in this description; and the situation looks almost like one of "sentiment" or "feeling" only. Nevertheless, the actual experience is that their fondness for the money prevents them throwing themselves whole-heartedly into that undivided and undistracted love of God which conscience tells them to be their clear duty.

"Now here comes the curious point. There is absolutely no reason why we should not love all the good and nice things which God's providence has put in our way, and enjoy them to the full. I may be awfully glad that I am rich and prosperous and healthy and honoured and respected; and I can throw myself heartily into the enjoyment of all the pleasant things which surround me without stint, and be as jolly and happy as the day is long; and this need not interfere in the least with my realisation that God is my creator and lord and must be wholly loved and served, and that I must never allow any thing on earth to spoil that love or service. But this introduces a contingent element into the case. My fondness for all these good things must not degenerate into an attachment. I must not get my soul so tied to them as to be unbalanced by their loss. Nor must my fondness become so intense as to injure or destroy my relish for God, or divert me from it, or make me forget his paramount claims or feel a distaste for his service.

We need not contemplate the case of a man who out of love of pleasant creatures deliberately turns his back on God and transgresses his laws, for that would be mortal sin; or even the case of a man who out of love of creatures commits a deliberate venial sin. But short of this, we can find a fascination in the love of some creature, or feel a tenacity in our fondness for it which becomes distinctly dangerous; and even if it does not issue specifically either in mortal or venial sin, is of such a nature that it would quite naturally lead us thereto. Even short of this it interposes a kind of veil between us and God, so as to diminish the clearness of our vision and to weaken the bent of our will towards him. In this way our singleness of purpose has been marred and our directness of aim has been diverted. We are in fact trying a compromise between God and Mammon. This of course is essentially a wrong attitude to be in. Moreover it becomes sinful as soon as it is consciously realised and complacently acquiesced in; for what before was perhaps nothing more than a disposition of the sensitive order has now become a confirmed and sanctioned attitude of mind. That I take it (concluded Herr Schneebels) is what we mean by de-ordination.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XI. DEORDINATION ILLUSTRATED.

"I HAVE thought of an analogy" (Quinley observed). "The marksman is supposed to aim at the bull's-eye, and the only perfect shot is the one that hits it. If he tries his best and misses it, that is an imperfection. If he misses it through not trying his best, that is a fault—a venial sin of weakness or ignorance. If he realises that he is not trying his best and does not care, that is a deliberate venial sin. If he does not care a damn about the whole business of shooting, and does it only because it is station orders, and fires at random, not caring whether he misses the target, that is a mortal sin as regards attitude of mind. If he deliberately aims outside the target out of sheer malice or protest against orders, that is a deliberate mortal sin in act."

"Nothing could be clearer," remarked Herr Schneebels; "and I would only add two remarks:

"The mortal sin of 'attitude' is an attitude of *indifference to duty*, wilfully entertained; the mortal sin of act is the putting of that attitude into effect. If it resulted in not shooting at all that would be a mortal sin of omission. If it results in purposely shooting off the target it is a mortal sin of commission.

"Again the attitude of mind, before it is consciously realised, is simple deordination; *objectively* sinful because a deviation from the straight line of duty, but not subjectively sinful or guilty because not realised and therefore not consciously entertained or complacently tolerated."

Herr Schneebels then proceeded to give us a few illustrations of the deordination idea, which are worth work-

ing out in full :—

FIRST ILLUSTRATION.

I lie ruminating one day in an idle hour. One thing leads to another till at last I imagine myself confronted with the chance of perpetrating a really successful sin. I picture a situation where by one simple act of fraud I could enjoy a fortune of a thousand pounds. The situation is free from all danger, from the police, from risks of exposure or even of suspicion. No deterrent motive exists to bar me from the act except the simple dictate of conscience that it is grievously wrong. In a ruminating way I imagine myself perpetrating the fraud ; and I actually view it with complacency.

It does not necessarily follow that if the imagination were converted into a reality : if that actual opportunity were at this moment put before me—it does not, I say, necessarily follow that I should do the fraudulent act. Confronted with the wide awake reality, other and better considerations would arise. My conscience would speak categorically, my moral judgment would steady itself, and my will would assert itself on the right side. Nevertheless the actual attitude of my mind in that state of rumination, day-dream though it might be, is an essentially inordinate attitude, and one which, if realised fully in its moral bearings, would become sinful even if merely regarded with complacency, and mortally sinful if entertained with positive satisfaction ; —I do not mean the natural delight which one would feel at the thought of becoming rich ; but acquiescence in the thought of becoming rich by fraud, as a sort of thing which I might feasibly do if I got the chance. Under the circumstances my strict moral duty would be to correct that attitude of mind by repudiating and rejecting the bare idea of ever committing such a sin.

St. Ignatius says the simple deliberation whether to commit a mortal sin is in itself a mortal sin, because it puts God and sin in the balance--makes it a matter of indifference which of the two is chosen. But we can go further, and say that to entertain with complacency the idea of deliberating about a mortal sin would be in itself an inordinate attitude of mind, and become sinful as soon as the complacency was realised and consciously acquiesced in.

It is this underlying stratum of disposition and attitude of mind which is the seed-ground not only of specific sin in isolated acts, but also of those chronic conditions of soul which St. Thomas calls vicious habits. Such habits—and here is the really subtle point—such habits need not necessarily be formed by repetition of acts. The unfortunate thing is that they can be formed and deeply-rooted prior to all acts. And the genesis can be in this wise :—

(1) First comes the innate disposition of the soul ; the instructive love of pleasure and of liberty, the shrinking from pain, discomfort and constraint.

(2) If the child has an effusive or expressive temperament these instincts will soon betray themselves, and will (under proper training) be checked from without, and the child by instruction will gradually learn to exercise self-control from within. In this way those dispositions will not be allowed to develope into habits, either in the form of attitudes of mind or of repeated acts ; and so the child will be saved from such tendencies by its openness of character and the checkings and discipline which follow upon the revelation.

(3) But if the child has a reserved and reticent temperament, these dispositions may lie more or less

concealed ; cherished internally as feelings but without outward expression; and therefore never exhibiting material for correction or instruction, but all the time pushing their roots deep into the soil.

(4) One could go through all the inordinate dispositions in the list which I gave you last week, and see the application in each case. Take for example the temperamental love of independence and freedom, which in the effusive child shows itself in petty exhibitions of pride, haughtiness, insubordination, disregard for rules and regulations and repeated breaches of discipline both at home and in the school. A competent parent will at once take that child in hand, and by a course of reproof, correction, punishment and at the same time instruction, practically eradicate those dispositions, or bring them under such control as to turn out a youth thoroughly well-imbued with principles of humility and subjection, and habituated both to the appreciation and practice of them.

(5) The reserved and reticent child, with just the same disposition deep in the soul, will escape all this discipline and training. Its deordination will never get beyond feelings, yearnings, day-dreams of imaginary realisations of what it yearns for. It will feel the irksomeness of restraint and subjection, but will never kick against it. Just as another child might console itself with visions of riches and luxuries, or another with visions of romance and adventure, another with visions of heroism and glory ; so this child will console itself with visions of liberty and independence which might be realised some day, but have no chance of being realised now. In this way its love of liberty and independence will grow side by side with a dislike for restraint and dependence till they constitute an attitude of mind and an outlook on life, and crystallise into an

ideal to be yearned for and aspired to, and perhaps to be attained some day.

When the boy becomes a man, and is thrown upon the world to shift for himself, he will suddenly come to realise that the old restraints which he has chafed under are removed, and a delighted sense of emancipation will come over him. On the other hand through lack of experience he will not for some time realise that the restraints and dependence involved in the adult-life are in some respects quite as serious as in the child-life, though they take another form. His new sense of liberty will soon be rudely checked by various unpleasant incidents in business or in social life. He will settle down to realise that his career depends on the observance of certain rules of conduct quite as numerous as those of home and school.

But still they do not cover the whole field. Outside the confines of business and society he is an absolutely free man, and can do as he likes without anyone to call him to book. Whatever dangerous or vicious inclinations there may be lurking in him will then have every chance of coming to the surface ; nay, they will be drawn to the surface by the suggestions of his environment. Lines of conduct, forms of indulgence which in a well ordered home had been regarded as altogether outside the horizon of feasibility because of their obvious wrongness, will now become feasible because they are practised without restraint or adverse comment among those he mixes with, and apparently without any loss of credit or respectability in the eyes of those familiar with them. At first the idea of falling in with such bad examples will produce a shock ; but this will gradually be weakened by familiarity, while on the other hand the seductions of pleasure will become all the stronger by the con-

tagion of frequent example.

Then, at first hesitatingly and with qualms of conscience, afterwards with increased boldness and callous equanimity, the youth will steadily go to the bad.

(6) In this case I am supposing that there was in that youth no real disposition to those sins and vices into which he is falling. He had never shown or even felt any proclivity that way in childhood or youth, at least not such as he could not overcome.

This defection, I am supposing, comes from one seemingly innocent root and source, namely the instinct for liberty and independence, which in itself is a perfectly natural and proper instinct for a man. But like every other instinct, it is a disposition which stands in need of supervision and control, and a well-established habit of discriminating between its proper and improper use. What has happened to this child is the cherishing of that disposition till it has become a dominating idea and a wayward tendency. The mind of the child in its day-dreams has become so fascinated with the pleasure of doing what it likes, that it will, when emancipated, find itself delighting in "liberty for liberty's sake" and will take joy in doing things out of the sheer pleasure of being free to do them.

All this is of course quite natural in itself. But the unfortunate circumstance in the case is this: On account of the reserved and secretive temperament of the child this propensity has never manifested itself, and therefore never been subjected to any course of discipline, forcing it to suppress its instincts on moral grounds when they issue in wrong doing. It has, moreover, never been imbued with the principles of right and wrong on this particular point; just because the need for instruction in this matter never made itself felt.

If the child, feeling the irksomeness of restraint, has nevertheless exercised self-control in submitting to it, this self-control has not been actuated by the sound and healthy principles of right and wrong, but has been merely a reluctant and resigned submission to the inevitable, against which it would be useless to rebel. Meantime the child has been consoling itself with dreams of liberty and independence which might some day come true ; but even if not, at least they were a source of delight to contemplate as imaginary possibilities. The dispositions towards emancipation were thus cherished and loved, and became a quiet though deep, dominant passion ; they became a permanent part of the outlook on life and got fixed into an attitude of mind.

The instinct for indulging in the love of liberty for liberty's sake was never counteracted or controlled by a habit of discriminating between liberties which should be indulged in and liberties which should be restrained. Hence as soon as any particular indulgence of liberty presents itself in later life, the whole soul throws itself instinctively in that direction with such absorbing satisfaction that the question whether it is a right or wrong use of liberty either is blocked out, or so blurred as to have no deterrent effect.

This (concluded Herr Schnecbels) is an attempt to illustrate what I said some weeks ago. It is an attempt to explain the mysterious degenerations which sometimes gradually, sometimes suddenly, happen to people who in home and school days were paragons of good behaviour, and gave the fairest promise for the future. The suggested solution lies in the development of an inordinate affection in early life, which never gave a chance for its correction or eradication just because, either through temperament or circumstances, it never

came out to the surface in such a way as to fall under the notice of parents or teachers as a vicious tendency calling for repression. Yet it was there growing and taking deep root all the time, and only needed a certain set of new circumstances in adult-life to bring it out.

SECOND ILLUSTRATION.

On another occasion Herr Schneebels offered us the following illustration :—

Harry Beaton married early, and married for love. His income was moderately sufficient and his prospects secure. As far as his own qualities and character were concerned, he deserved every success ; he was industrious, prompt, reliable and absolutely honest, having been brought up on the principle that it was "wicked even to steal a pin." Misfortune nevertheless came upon him. His salary, instead of being increased, was reduced on a genuine plea of depression of trade. Cost of living went up at the same time, while the demands of an increasing family, and ill-health and doctor's bills incurred by scanty living, accumulated into a domestic catastrophe. Into Beaton's mind, depressed and melancholy, there entered the all-absorbing anxiety how to make two ends meet ; and the obvious impossibility of doing so drove him to distraction. Suggestions which had never entered into his mind before, now came vividly into consciousness. To meet the issue only two means were possible ; manipulating his books in the counting-house, or the risking of what little he had in hope of a lucky chance on the race course. His mind instinctively revolted against both alternatives ; both seemed to him equally repugnant in different ways, and he did not entertain them for a moment. He would rather suffer—nay, even see his dear ones suffer, a thousand times than once break the integrity of his moral life.

Still these suggestions did not leave him. They kept intruding themselves day by day; and the imagination cast round them so bright a halo of success and relief as to render their heinousness dim and obscure. As he made up his accounts his mind became keen to see the various opportunities which a fully trusted cashier had of being untrustworthy without detection—for the books were not audited in any way which would lead to exposure. He resisted the suggestion every time, and did his duty faithfully. At last however, an extraordinary opportunity presented itself, of holding back unentered a deposit of £ 500 which he knew from the circumstances would not be called for except after a whole year's time, and its absence from the books would never be detected. "Before the year is out (suggested the temptor) circumstances will change, and you can pay it back in time." A wave of intense feeling passed over his mind, blurred his vision, fascinated his will, and carried him on to action. Next day the races were on. He had received a splendid tip; and the temptor said: "If by a lucky bet you can double your funds, you can pay back the £ 500. You will thus save your honesty and be a rich man to boot." In a dazed state of excitement he went to the races, laid the money, won £ 1,500, and left the race course in a wild state of ecstasy. Next morning he carried £500 back to the office in his pocket and filled in the entry—only two days post-dated. His whole position was redeemed. He had actually managed to become a rich man in a moment, and (so he persuaded himself) without a stigma on his honesty; and without having really incurred the guilt of theft.

Whatever qualms he felt about his sudden wealth were laboriously fought down by pleading that it was the outcome of a fair bet; though the thought that

such a bet had only become possible by the (temporary) appropriation and risk of his employer's money left him extremely uncomfortable for a time. The improved condition of his finances had to be explained to his wife, of course. He escaped that difficulty first by saying evasively that business had improved, but was "forced" at last into a lie by saying that his salary had been raised again. He had also to be careful not to be too free in the use of his newly acquired wealth, lest suspicions should be aroused. Being a clever and self-possessed character he succeeded in averting all discovery, and he ended in feeling quite justified in all he had done, especially since it had relieved the suffering and want of those dear to him, and restored a whole family to health and happiness.

It was the case of a convert (said Herr Schneebels) who told me of the incident after his reception into the Church. With my fondness for psychology I tried to dive into the roots and sources of this singular, and I may say *unique* defection, in a character which as far as I could see was thoroughly sound from foundation to roof. In the end I traced it to one of the finest of virtues ; a tender love for and devotion to his suffering wife and children. He had been perfectly ready to face privation for himself. "Scio pauperiem pati" he said to me ; " it was not for myself I cared a jot. But to see the pale drawn face of Matilda, and the sad plight of four half-starving children—and above all the distress which *she* felt for them—simply maddened me. Something desperate must be done, I said to myself—and I did the one desperate thing that came in my way."

It was the case of a noble virtue (or a group of virtues) spoiled by deordination—and this in the way not of defect but of excess ; an intensity too unrestrained, an

attachment too tenacious, the fascination of an earthly love, excellent in itself, luring the soul to adopt means for its realisation which involved the sacrifice of God to a creature. Nothing was wrong with that love of wife and children, that sympathy with suffering—except just one little thing, not sinful in itself. It was *too intense* to leave the soul in self-possession face to face with God; and by being too intense it became inordinate.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XII. A FURTHER ILLUSTRATION.

"I CAN bring out the idea still more clearly by another example, this time not of deordination but of ordination —the secret development of a good or virtuous habit in early life which served to keep a man straight all his life in spite of all attractions to the contrary. It is perfectly authentic, and was told me personally by a man of middle life as his own actual experience.

"I believe," he said to me one day, "that as a child and youth I was by inborn constitution disposed to every vice, sin and crime which a man is capable of committing. There is no much humility in this (he added), it is simply a psychological fact. I was really the bad boy of the family; the only one, for they were a model lot except myself. I can say with appreciation and truth that I never learnt any evil by word or deed or example from any one of them; all my badness came from myself, and I was the shock and scandal of the whole domestic group. Every bad thing I could possibly do, I did. I was punished every time, wisely and effectively, and that kept me within bounds.

"I was not a bad boy in the sense of having no conscience. On the contrary I had a most tender conscience when it was appealed to; and was intensely conscious of my wickedness, and felt terribly guilty when reproached for anything wrong. In most cases the cause of my misdoings was simply impulse of passion and the fascination of the object, which I felt to be irresistible; —and I believe it was irresistible at the moment. But I was capable of working out a very deliberate sin, for instance, on one or two occasions a carefully planned theft of money or things I coveted. The driving force to these calculated sins was always an overpowering fascination in the object I coveted; and once it was a money fraud to get out of the difficulties of a small debt, or to cover previous small thefts.

"What strikes me now when I look back is the astute planning which I went through in order not to be found out. With detailed and complicated ingenuity I really did make sure of this, eliminating even the risks of a chance discovery. If I went into details you would agree with me, that a boy who could deliberately plan like that a deed which he knew all the time was a grievous sin, and felt a bad conscience over it acutely all the time, was capable of any sin or crime without the least hesitation.

"What is the more remarkable (my narrator went on). I feel about myself just the same now. As far as dispositions are concerned I could at a moment's notice do anything, however wicked, without the least hesitation: murder, robbery, fraud, adultery and anything worse still which you might like to specify. And what is more strange still; I *could*, and feel that once started I *would* perpetrate all or any of these horrors without the least compunction at the time."

"I listened with astonishment, (said Herr Schneebels). If I had known—Wilberforce let us call him—for years. I had never detected in him even the remotest suggestion of anything he was telling me. So I said to him: 'Come, Wilberforce, you are pulling my leg. If you were to tell me the exact contrary I should believe you; but you can't expect me to swallow a tale like that!'"

"Literally true, Honest Injun" said Wilberforce: "Without a shred of exaggeration even! It may seem morbid, perhaps, when I tell you I have spent hours going through a catalogue of every sin, crime and vice of which a man is capable down to the most horrible—and I think my knowledge is exhaustive. Quite a number of them I could tick off as offering absolutely no attraction to me. For instance, I cannot imagine myself tempted to idolatry or blasphemy, and I feel an instinctive abhorrence of superstition and magic. Nor could I imagine myself being deliberately cruel to anybody or revengeful for revenge's sake. But wherever I could picture a situation in which an attractive object presented itself, and the attraction would appeal strongly to my feelings, my self-consciousness has always honestly confessed: Let that attraction once get hold on me and I am capable of making straight for that object, tenaciously sticking to my purpose right to the very end, no matter what conscience might say. And when it was done, I really doubt whether I should feel any remorse or compunction for it—even though I might deliberately take up the attitude of repentance on purely reflex grounds, on the simple conviction that I ought to.

"In short, the whole of my nature from the side of feeling, impulse and emotion is potentially as bad as bad

could be. And no calm dictate of reason or conscience would deter me if once I let that side of my nature loose so *to start* a sin. The only expedient of self-control which has kept me straight in my adult life is: *Obsta principiis.* As soon as the very first suggestion of an impulse appears, batter it down. If you once let the head appear the whole body will inevitably follow. Kill impulse *before it is born*, or it will kill you.

SIN WITH IMPUNITY.

"If once the impulse took hold of me, I should make straight for that object without hesitation provided I could do so with full impunity and realised my impunity.

'By impunity (he went on) I don't mean considerations of hell. To a man under a psychical impulse that consideration is too remote. I mean impunity from earthly interference and earthly consequences. If it were a matter of committing murder, the thought of being discovered by the police would simply paralyse my action and atrophy my impulse. If it was doing something injurious or shameful to another person, the thought that the crime would be reported, betrayed or avenged would be enough to kill out even the most overwhelming impulse. The thought of being dragged before court and publicly branded with a shameful crime, so that my reputation would be gone—that too would be sufficient to put a bar to the sin.

I don't mean that considerations of this sort would always stop an impulse in mid-current when once well started. They might, if they came on the mind with overwhelming vividness; but, such vividness is not likely when the mind is absorbed and whirling along. What I mean is that the vivid realisation of these dangers and risks at the moment when the impulse was just about to arise would effectually kill it on the spot. It

would never reach the surface, and I should be saved."

"How extraordinary" I said, for I could say nothing else.

AN ORDINATE DISPOSITION TO THE RESCUE.

"Well (Wilberforce continued). I am only telling you this to illustrate the thing you were just talking about. You gave me an instance to show how a man could suddenly go wrong in the middle of his life through the emergence of an inordinate disposition (not of itself sinful) which had been cherished and got fixed into an attitude of mind in early life. In return I wanted to give you the converse instance of a man who, in spite of every vicious inborn disposition, could be kept straight all his life by an *ordinate* disposition (not of itself virtuous) which had been cherished and got fixed as an attitude of mind in early life."

"I see your purpose," I replied, "but I don't quite see what 'ordinate disposition' you refer to. According to your own account (which I confess I have still to take with a large dose of salt) the only thing which has kept you from every crime under the sun is *a dread of being found out*—which doesn't exactly sound very creditable, does it? It does not seem to rise much above a vulgar fear of the police, or a selfish desire of saving your skin."

"Et Tu Brute?" (exclaimed Wilberforce). "I might have expected an old friend like you, and a philosopher to boot, to have taken a more sympathetic view of the case."

"Well," I replied laughing, "that's what it looks like to me. Try to put it better if you can."

THE CREDIT OF A GOOD NAME.

Wilberforce answered: "I have tried several times to express it in one phrase but failed. It is certainly not a vulgar fear of the police, nor a mere selfish desire of

saving one's own skin. It is something more akin to self-respect, or pride of a good name and an unstained reputation; a shrinking from being publicly associated with anything shameful or disgraceful or disreputable, or of incurring the reproach of worthy men; a dread of exposure and public disgrace, and of scoffers pointing at me the finger of scorn and the pencil of derision; an intense shrinking from anything like a "scene" in which my personal dignity, credit and reputation would be at stake. Perhaps this looks like nothing but *an acute susceptibility to public opinion*. Yet it is more than that. In some good and noble cause I should be ready to flout public opinion altogether if I were sure of my ground; and the consciousness of a sound position would enable me to bear the stings of reproach and criticism without wincing. But to fall under reproach and criticism knowing that I deserved it, is a thing which would fill me with such shame and confusion that I could no longer hold up my head. In losing the respect of others I should also lose my self-respect, and I would rather lose anything else in the world than that. In fact, I feel acutely in Shakespeare's phrase that

Good name in man and woman
Is the immediate jewel of the soul.

And so acute and sensitive is my feeling in this matter that it would prove a complete deterrent to any action which would deservedly deprive me of that good name—even the disposition to do it would be paralysed at once, and turn into a shrinking from it.

"But put me into a situation where this deterrent is totally removed. Let it be some action so secret as to be absolutely safe from exposure; or, if it involved a confederate, let that confederate be safe and trustworthy, incapable of treachery and perfectly identified

with me in mind and will. Let the scene be some desert island where no machinery of law or civilisation or public opinion could penetrate. In such a state of immunity from outward control the motive I have described would no longer have place. I should have to fall back on other deterrents, if any, in order to fortify myself against temptation. But the peculiarity of my temperament is such that under such circumstances no other deterrents would be successful in keeping my vicious propensities in order, given the object and opportunities calculated to arouse them, and time for the impulse to start. Only this peculiar susceptibility to the reproach of others and dread of a discredited reputation would hold me back."

EARLY IMPRESSIONS.

"You are talking so sanely and coherently," I said to Wilberforce, "that I am beginning to believe you. But tell me, how did this singular phase of mentality impress itself on your mind?"

"I believe (replied Wilberforce) it came from the fact that my family was a family of spotless respectability, and was so deeply imbued with the maxim: 'Never do anything of which you feel ashamed, or which would bring shame on your family' that I got simply saturated with the idea. There was no snobbery about it, no affectation, and no self-righteousness; it was the simple outcome of the goodness which pervaded our parents, and set us the standard, and infused into us an honest pride of self-respect, and a feeling of repugnance to anything that was unseemly. The result you might expect to be somewhat naturalistic as laying more stress on the disgrace than on the sin—'It's worse than wicked my child, it's vulgar'—But I must say it never really degenerated into that. In the background lay a con-

scientious ideal of right and wrong as such ; and it helped one to work towards that ideal by appealing not only to the moral law, but to self-respect and the good name which is more to be desired than great riches. It did not keep us young men absolutely straight in all respects ; but it effectually deterred us from even entertaining the idea of doing anything dishonorable or base to which shame, disgrace or infamy could be attached, and this in spite of an environment which contained at least the average amount of evil suggestion and bad example."

Wilberforce (Herr Schneebels here explained) was a Protestant when he told me this—a member of a good old Church of England family ; and of the Church of England is especially true that proverb :

"God helps those that help themselves."

As an outcome of many conversations like the above he gradually approached the Church, and was received some months after the foregoing talk, at the age of forty-five. What surprised him most in the Church was the complete apparatus of "helps" it offered to the soul of an earnest man ; how it cleared up principles and motives, and turned them into a living force—just the things the Church of England could never do. "The Church of England (he once said) does not make people good but supposes them to be good ; whereas the Catholic Church supposes nothing, but takes you as you are, and tells you what you must be, and shows you how to be it."

LATER REFLECTIONS.

Later on I asked him whether he still thought as much of his motive of self-respect, etc., as being the one real force which had kept him straight. He replied : "Of course I see things in better perspective now, but I don't think it has produced any change in the main fact. It is

not so much a question of the ethical value of a motive as of its efficacy. You told me yesterday how in point of appeal the highest motive (such as the love of God) might easily be the weakest, while the lowest motive might just as easily be the strongest, as far as its efficacy and force in moving the soul."

"A man confronted with a particular temptation may be chock-full of theology. He realises the supreme duty of loving God, the heinousness of sin, the punishment of hell with a perfectly clear and calm conviction. But somehow or other they do not stir him in any pshychological way; they neither excite his emotions nor brace up his will. But suddenly the idea of being caught, arrested and brought to court comes vividly before him. It literally makes him jump. It stirs him up body and soul. It shakes him almost to pieces, and dislocates the connection of his internal parts, and brings him to a sudden stop. When he succeeds in gathering himself together again he finds a new arrangement inside him. Feelings, motives, impulses, have settled down into a new set of relations. What was before linked together is now disjoined; what was before disjoined is now linked together. The result is that now he will do what before he would not do; what before he would do, now he will not do. It is like the turn of a kaleidoscope which out of the same materials gives a totally different picture."

"I understand you completely"—was my comment (said Herr Schneebels): "It is the mysterious power of a psychological impress—The sort of thing which happens physically when a man, who has been totally paralysed for years, jumps out of the window at the cry of 'House afire.'"

Here the irrepressible Quinley broke in:—"It reminds me of a time when I once walked into church with my

hat on—I must have been awfully distracted—and genuflected and knelt down and began my prayers. Then suddenly I missed my hat, and found it on my head—and this in front of a full congregation! If I had been caught committing murder, robbery, rape and every possible crime I could not have felt more ashamed. It would have been a perfect relief if the earth had yawned and swallowed me up, as I heard a titter go round and felt my head and ears on fire."

CONCLUSION.

Herr Schneebels continued with his dialogue :—

"Pretty mind the same with my 'self-respect'" said Wilberforce. "It is not so much a matter of motive as a matter of stimulus. Susceptibility to the appeal of 'the credit of a good name,' etc., happens through early circumstances to have taken a thorough grip of my mind; and I am still convinced that it has been my providential saving. And though it involves an acknowledgment of indebtedness to a lower motive, I don't feel that there is anything degrading about it. Do you?"

"No" I replied. "St. Ignatius sets his meditation on hell expressly for the purpose that 'if ever through my fault I should become oblivious of the love of God, at least the fear of punishment may help me to keep out of sin.' If a man can sanely make use of the thought of hell in that way, there is no reason why he should not make use of any other motive of the natural order, such as the credit of one's good name, etc., which may help. The lower motive does not in any way exclude the higher, but merely helps to support it and lend it efficacy."

"So (concluded Herr Schneebels) I think I have made it pretty clear how important a function in the 'moral life' can be exercised by what I have called dispositions and attitudes of mind viewed as a habit of the soul,

no matter whether it be inordinate habit or an ordinate habit. It is in this almost subconscious region that the answer to the question 'What sort of a man am I at present' will carry with it an answer to the further question: 'What sort of a man am I going to be in the future?' Our study of the 'successful sin' has brought out what mischief an inordinate affection can do; the Beaton case has shown what mischief even a virtue run to excess can do; and the Wilberforce case has shown, on the contrary, what good a strong ordinate affection can do."

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XIII. AQUINAS TO THE RESCUE.

NEXT day it was Finley's turn: "It may be cheeky for me to say so (he began). But it seems to me that if we were to read St. Thomas more carefully we should be under no necessity of finding a 'middle zone' between the precepts and the counsels."

"Bravo Finley" exclaimed Herr Schneebels. "I am afraid that St. Thomas, in spite of all that is said in his praise, is (like Shakespeare and other oft-quoted classics) rather a neglected author among us. I fancy we take him too much for granted. But tell me exactly how St. Thomas is going to solve our problem."

"Well" said Finley. "He seems to solve it by extending the commandments so widely as to cover all the obligations you are trying to find in what you call the 'middle zone.' First St. Thomas gives us an exhaustive list of all possible virtues; and one is astonished to find how many

they are. Secondly, he takes it as a principle that every virtue is the golden mean between two vices, the one by excess and the other by defect. Hence for every one virtue there are two vices at least, and often several. The result is, if you are astonished at the number of virtues, you become still more astonished at the number of vices. Thirdly, by its very nature every vice means sin; sometimes venial, sometimes mortal, but always sin. In looking over these long lists I was struck to see how many things St. Thomas calls vices which I have always been in the habit of looking upon as mere imperfections. While reading in a meditative sort of way, it struck me that all those inordinate 'dispositions' and 'attitudes of mind' which you have been discussing can be convicted not merely of sinfulness in tendency, but of sinfulness in themselves; and sinfulness which can be reduced to the specific every time. But as all sins, whether mortal or venial, are forbidden under precept, it seems to me that the 'middle zone' you are looking for is not really a middle zone at all, but simply the wider range of venial sin which we are not in the habit of paying much attention to; and that the old, hard and fast disjunction: precepts *vs.* counsels of perfection, remains adequate."

"That is a very valuable light" said Herr Schneebels. "What I suggest is that by to-morrow you work the matter out in detail. Bring us a list of St. Thomas's vices which you think will satisfy our needs, and let us see what can be made out of it."

VIRTUES AND VICES.

Next day Finley gave in a paper to Herr Schneebels, out of which the following extracts were culled at recreation :—

"St. Thomas begins by saying that the intrinsic prin-

ciple of human acts is the power [to do the thing] and the habit (of doing it); and a habit is the quality of a power which gives it readiness to act, and facility in acting—with a corresponding unreadiness and difficulty in acting the opposite way. A habit may be inborn (temperamental disposition) or acquired by repeated acts, or even divinely infused. No matter how it comes, it is a permanent disposition of the soul quite irrespective of any acts. It may remain unused for a time, but is there all the time, ready to issue in action as soon as the occasion arises. Habits can be good or bad, and any habit may be taken as good unless its badness can be demonstrated. Habits which have no bearing on moral conduct, being 'indifferent' but innocent, are still good for this reason. But as soon as a good habit has any relation to morality it is called a virtue—'a good quality of the mind by which we live righteously.' And living righteously means living according to the law of God, and in right relation to him as our end. On the other hand any habit which is contrary to virtue is called a vice. Just as a virtue is a permanent disposition of the soul, irrespective of particular virtuous acts, so a vice is a permanent disposition of the soul irrespective of particular vicious acts. Particular acts can of course be isolated; for instance if a man steals on one occasion only, under a particular temptation. Such an isolated act can coexist with the virtue of honesty which is the normal habit of the soul, as it forms only a single divergence from the virtue. It is only by repetition of acts of stealing that the habit of honesty will be weakened and destroyed and a contrary habit of theft will take its place."

"I think" said Finley. "It seems clear from this that St. Thomas covers fully the middle zone you are looking for. Under his principles of habits good or bad he in-

cludes all those dispositions and attitudes of mind which you call sinful, short of specific sin. He distinctly recognises those dispositions and attitudes of mind as virtues if they are good, and vices if they are bad. Even where they do not issue in specific *acts* of virtue or vice, they are still lying there as good or bad qualities of the soul, virtuous or vicious in themselves."

SINS VS. IMPERFECTIONS.

There was a general murmur of assent. "Go on Quinley" said Herr Schneebels ; and Quinley proceeded :—

Now what strikes me is, how very definite St. Thomas is in calling "sins" things which one is rather in the habit of regarding as mere imperfections. Under each heading of virtue he discusses the contrary vices, and concludes, almost with the regularity of a formula :—"Therefore such and such a thing is a sin." Whatever as a habit is marked as a vice, becomes a sin as soon as it issues in a specific act. Now look at this list, not complete, of the things which St. Thomas enumerates as vices (and therefore in specific acts as sins).

(1) *Prudence* is the virtue of directing oneself to right ends by right means. Among the contrary vices are imprudence, rashness, hastiness, lack of consideration, inconstancy, negligence, laziness, tepidity, false prudence, false solicitude, slyness, underhandedness, insincerity.

(2) *Fortitude* is the virtue of holding to the right end and means in spite of the deterrents of pain, dislike or fear. Among the vices contrary to fortitude are pusilanimity, cowardice, shirking ; and (by excess) rashness, overboldness, temerity, obstinacy, stubbornness, presumption.

(3) *Temperance* is the virtue of holding to the right end and means in spite of the attractions of pleasure or ease. Among the contrary vices are all undue in-

dulgences in pleasure for pleasure's sake, giving way to impulse, distaste for spiritual things, sluggishness, laziness.

(4) *Among miscellaneous vices* I picked out the following:—Ingratitude, thanklessness, faithlessness, simulation, boasting, irony, vanity, flattery, meanness, wastefulness, curiosity, fretfulness—which I fancy one usually looks upon as mere imperfections, while St. Thomas treats them very seriously as specific sins.

"I have left out the obvious vices," said Finley "and rather jotted down those which are general enough or indeterminate enough to escape notice as specific sins, but which are emphatically and in detail specified as sins by St. Thomas—which can sometimes be mortal, sometimes venial, but are always sins as soon as they are in the least degree opposed to the contrary virtue. Of course there can be such a thing as an innocent curiosity, or a fit of laziness which merely means tiredness and need of rest, and so on. But after taking a cursory glance over the list, it seems to me that every inordinate disposition of the soul, every inordinate attitude of mind can be brought under one or other of such a multitude of headings; and therefore can become specifically sinful as soon as it is consciously realised and consented to."

IMPORTANCE OF VENIAL SIN.

"I think you are right," said Herr Schneebels. "It is no part of my contention that our moral theology does not contain all I am striving for. What I want is to make sure that we all realise it, and do not let ourselves to lose sight of it. There is a danger among students of focussing themselves down so exclusively on the details of casuistry as to narrow the mental horizon; and above all to concentrate so intensely on mortal sins as

to lose sight of the importance of venial sins, still more of dispositions and attitudes of mind. Of course in point of view of immediate salvation or damnation mortal sin is the crucial fact. But in the practical life of the soul venial sin plays so much more active a part, and extends over so much wider a field, that anything which looks like treating venial sin in an off hand way is disastrous. For it is in the field of venial sin rather than mortal sin that dispositions of soul and attitudes of mind can have free scope for development into habits, which give a wrong tone and colour to life, and not only stand in the way of the healthy upward development of the spiritual life, but strew life with floating mines, any one of which may explode any time with fatal results. In urging the importance of a psychological study of morality side by side with the legalistic or forensic study, I am simply wishing to get down to the roots and springs instead of confining all our attention to the surface. Of the two I should suggest that the psychological study is far more important. It is the substantial study, in which the forensic or legalistic material is rather to be pre-supposed.

A FURTHER ANALYSIS.

They got on to the subject again next day. "Starting from what Finley was urging yesterday," said Dawson, "It seems to me that if we took up a more comprehensive view starting from the virtues and contrary vices we should be able to get rid of the middle zone between precepts and counsels of perfection. What his proposal comes I take to be this :—All the virtues without exception are matter of precept. A virtue is defined as "the disposition of a thing according to its nature," which in the case of a human being means harmony between the human will and the law of God ; while everything which mars this harmony is sin or vice. St. Thomas defines

the distinction between mortal and venial sins by saying that mortal sin is an act *against* the law, whereas venial sin is *beside* the law (praeter legem). Again mortal sin means "a sin committed out of malice," while a venial sin is committed "out of weakness or ignorance." Again a mortal sin is *directly* against charity to God or one's neighbour, and means choosing a thing *contrary* to divine charity, proving that a man prefers that thing to the love of God. A mortal sin means turning the back on God, and constitutes an irreparable breach with him—until it is undone by penance; while venial sin is only a turning aside from God which is not a real abandonment of him but is a distraction from him and from his love, which is reparable by the simple reversal of the attitude of the mind. Venial sin means a diminution of love of God on account of the counter-attraction of the creature; a love of a creature in such a way that it injures the integrity of our love of God without destroying it altogether.

Now after this preamble, what I want to come to is this. The first and greatest commandment of the law is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." A man who does this is in a state of perfection; and yet this first and greatest commandment is not a mere counsel of perfection; it is really a command, and therefore must bind us with a strict obligation. But if so, then any failure, however small, to realise this commandment in ourselves must be a sin—venial of course down to a certain point. Therein lies my difficulty.

We have already tried to get rid of the "middle zone" by extending the range of venial sin to cover it all. But now it seems as if we must extend venial sin

still further, and make it cover the field of the counsels of perfection. If this first and greatest commandment is really a commandment, the counsels of perfection are no longer counsels but become obligations; so that the adequate division is sin *vs.* perfection.

"No so fast," interrupted Herr Schneebels. "The counsels of perfection presuppose that we are imperfect, and merely suggest to us certain special means by which we may more successfully strive for perfection."

"That is all very well," said Dawson. "But if we are commanded to be perfect, we are bound to take all the means possible to be perfect; and if these particular means help better than others we are bound to make use of them, and so they are no longer counsels."

THE PRECEPT OF PERFECTION.

"A distinction seems to be wanted," said Herr Schneebels. The first and greatest commandment certainly imposes on us a law of perfection: "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect;" and commandment certainly means obligation. I think the logical outcome of the first and greatest commandment is that every man is bound to *strive* for perfection; and if perfection were something quite easy, every man who is imperfect would to that extent be sinful. But on account of the limitations of human nature, especially under the handicaps of inborn dispositions and faulty training, men generally speaking find themselves at any stage of their existence in a very imperfect state. This state of imperfection may be to some extent (nay to a great extent) due to sins, if only venial sins, in the past. But it may also be due to imperfections over which the man had no control or a very partial control. The fact is, a man may be thinking and doing things which are sinful for a long time without realising their sinfulness, or without realising his own power to control them. Our spiritual life

is, or ought to be, one succession of lights showing us something better, and the way to something better. A child born and brought up under the most favourable conditions (both of nature and of grace) might never experience any inordinate disposition which it could not instantly control, and might never get into an inordinate attitude of mind which it could not correct as soon as it appeared on the scene. Such a child might begin from the very first loving God with all its heart and soul and mind and strength, and so be perfect from the very first. In the lives of the Saints we sometimes come across specimens of this sort, and I have no doubt they occur in ordinary life more commonly than we realise. But these conditions are not in the common run; and the result is that any man, calling himself to account at any moment, will find himself an extremely imperfect being, and far removed from the standard which the first and greatest commandment puts before us.

HUMAN HANDICAPS.

"Some of his imperfections, especially deliberate or semi-deliberate venial sins may (let us suppose) be easily checked at once. But there still remain dispositions and habits of mind which tend toward such sins. These require a tremendous amount of vigilance and energy to keep them from issuing in further sins, and a slow painstaking process to diminish their influence and gradually eliminate them altogether. Hence when the first and greatest commandment one day breaks upon him in a new and startling light, as a real commandment and incumbent duty, he will be able to make a formal adhesion to it by pronouncing an act of the perfect love of God and meaning it seriously. He puts himself for that moment in the perfect state which the commandment imposes on him as a duty. But before long the

old dispositions and attitudes of mind, which are in some degree incompatible with this perfect love of God, re-assert themselves; and if he has conceived a serious purpose of realising that commandment as an habitual thing, he will be engaged in a constant struggle with a world of conflicting forces, each of which he can engage with in turn; but while he is attending to one of them half a dozen others are having their own way.

"It suggests to me" said Quinley, laughing, "the picture of a man surrounded by a crowd of frantic women pummelling and slapping him from all directions. He may ward of this or that blow, but is helpless under a rain of blows."

"Just so," said Herr Schneebels: "A man who at a certain moment of time awakes to realise the commandment to be perfect, and takes it to heart, is simply incapable of tackling the whole complex process at once. Hence while the commandment *in the abstract* is to be *absolutely perfect*, its application to the single individual soul is extremely limited. *Ad impossibile nemo tenetur;* no man is bound to jump over the moon when with all his present efforts he cannot even jump over a five-barred gate. The commandment therefore reduces itself to this: 'If you cannot be perfect, at least be as perfect as you can.' Strive to get nearer perfection, making one stage of progress the stepping-stone to the next. This is why even those who have taken the vows of religion are said to be, not in the *status perfectionis acquisitae*, but in the *status perfectionis acquirandæ*; in other words, they have not vowed to be perfect, but only to strive for perfection.

THE UNATTAINABLE IDEAL.

"In short the first and greatest commandment has in practice to be qualified. The commandment of perfec-

tion is there, and is abstractly incumbent on all. But concretely, no man can be expected to do more than he can ; and therefore the first and greatest commandment presents itself to us as an *unattainable ideal* to most of those who attempt to realise it ; and all they have to do is to be *trying their level best to advance nearer and nearer towards it.*

"Moral theology in its casuistical department merely discusses the question : Under what circumstances does the failure to carry out this commandment involve mortal sin ? Clearly it would be a mortal sin to ignore and turn one's back on the commandment altogether, and give up the intention of loving God at all. Secondly, any specific act which runs deliberately and absolutely against any one of God's other commandments is a mortal sin against this commandment. Thirdly, any chronic neglect of God, practically ignoring his existence or his rulership over life, realised and persisted in after that realisation, would be a mortal sin of omission. Anything short of this becomes by default a venial sin ; and there the casuist leaves the question."

"It is exactly this blank that ought to be filled up," said Herr Schneebels "and I think Finley's exposition of St. Thomas helps us to do it."

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XIV. A PAUSE AND A TRANSITION.

Our study of the method of St. Thomas (said Herr Schneebels) has served me one very useful purpose. You remember how at the beginning I divided the "middle zone" question into two parts, one looking downwards towards sin and the other looking upwards towards virtue. And I feel that we shall never get the question clear till we have roughly covered both grounds, and then can come back and synthesise the two parts into one. St. Thomas, by treating of sins as defections from virtues, gives us the necessary link, and we had better make use of it at once.

THE HIGHER CONSCIENCE.

Before doing so, I want to go back to the idea with which the whole discussion began, and which, by a word-coinage of my own I call "the higher conscience."

It is by this time pretty clear what I mean by the higher conscience, as far as it has relation to sin. It is not a difference of organism so to speak, or of function, but a difference of range and outlook. The "ordinary conscience" as we may call, it voices the right and condemns the wrong in obvious matters such as are imposed in express terms by the promulgation of the Divine law, saying that this act must be done and that act must not be done ; but the act in question must come concretely and definitely in view before any pronouncement of conscience takes place. The "higher conscience" has the advantage of a man standing on a hill and capable of taking a bird's-eye view of things. It sees acts in their environment ; in their antecedents and consequents ; in their inner causes and their ulterior effects. It

looks not merely at the thing done but the agent that does or might do it. It penetrates into the interior dispositions of the soul, and the attitudes of mind out of which such an act might proceed. Suppose the law is a prohibition, it extends the prohibition not merely to the act itself, but to those antecedents in the soul which by their tendency might naturally issue in such a forbidden act. In those antecedents it recognises the sin "in causa," and orders the suppression of the cause. In the same antecedents it recognises the internal occasion, which it forces back if necessary from the proximate to the remote, and as far as possible eliminates it altogether. To the prohibition of the act it adds a prohibition of everything that may present itself as a means to the act, anything that facilitates the act, anything that puts one in the direction and carries with it a risk of our falling into the act. It imposes a commandment to take the safe course which will eliminate all risks, and make sure that we shall not lapse from the absolute integrity of the moral life, not even into the smallest sin so far as human frailty will allow. All this the higher conscience does, not by way of counsel or advice or persuasion, but by an imperative voice just as categorical as that of the "ordinary" conscience, of which it is merely an extension. Its dictate carries with it just the same sense of obligation, of duty—only it is obligation extended over a wider field ; a more comprehensive field ; a field which covers the whole range of the psychological life of a man, and not merely the legal or forensic life embodied in the specific precepts and prohibitions of the commandments. Whereas the ordinary conscience looks just to the obvious bare essentials of law binding under specific sin and punishment, the higher conscience looks to the integrity and com-

pleteness of the moral life in its roots and sources. To put it another way, while the ordinary conscience is concerned only with *acts*, the higher conscience is concerned with *habits* in the scholastic sense of the word; the dispositions and facilities of the soul to live always on the lines of virtue, with a tenacity of grip which would make those lines safe and permanent and thorough, and reduce the chances of a lapse into vice or sin, even incidentally, to the minimum. The ordinary conscience, finally, confines itself to the *minimum necessary*, which is the actual avoidance of specific sin; while the higher conscience embraces the *maximum possible*, which is that a man shall be doing his level best. Nor is this, I say, merely a matter of counsel but a matter of precept —the precept of the first and greatest commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole mind and thy whole soul and thy whole strength; and thy neighbour as thyself."

DANGER OF SUBJECTIVISM.

I have always felt (said Herr Schneebels) a liability to be charged with novelty in propounding my views on the higher conscience. But I believe that the first and greatest of the commandments provides me with a complete vindication. At the same time an explanation needs to be added. It must be acknowledged that there is something subjective in the higher conscience, which is variable in different men; and if this is so, how can we give to it the nature of a strict obligation or duty without introducing something approximating to personal inspiration in each individual man? Or failing that, does it not involve us in a system of subjectivism in which each man claims to be a law to himself, and refuses to submit to the ordinary objective standards of the Church's guidance? To put it practically: Might

not a penitent easily come to loggerheads with his confessor by telling him: "Whatever you may say, my higher conscience tells me different; and whatever my higher conscience tells me to do or not to do, that fixes my obligation and my duty once and for all." I have thought over that objection, concludes Herr Schneebels, and will try to shape out an answer for it.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT.

I think (said Herr Schneebels) the first and greatest commandment settles it for us that it is our bounden duty to love God as completely and fully as we can; in short, it is our strict and bounden duty to do our level best to carry out this commandment to the fullest of which we are capable. If you push the logic of this idea strictly, it would seem to eliminate all notion of the counsels, and turn everything into precepts. So far as we love God with mind or heart or soul or strength less than we are capable of, so far do we sin—even though it be "only" venial sin. Even this conclusion, rigoristic as it may appear, I believe to be sound. But if so, it would seem that everybody living the Christian life comfortably, so to speak, would be in a rather bad way. I am quite sure (said Herr Schneebels) that I could, if I tried, love God with heart and mind and soul and strength a great deal more than I do; and I suppose that every one of you would confess the same; and yet the thought does not make us feel particularly uncomfortable as if we were shirking an obligation or neglecting a duty. We are all earnest and conscientious Christians, I am quite sure; and while we recognise that there are levels of virtue and fervour far above us which some heroic souls are living up to, (whom we call Saints) we cannot fairly be taunted as shirkers or slackers because we are not up at those levels. If asked "Why

don't you try, at least," I suppose we should answer: "I don't feel called that way, and from various attempts made in times of special fervour I don't think I could stand it. It would be too much of a strain to keep up, at least; and so I have taken a certain level which seems to suit me, and which I can manage to carry on. I feel that I ought to do *that* much, at least, and so I am trying to do it fully without straining after anything more." In this way each earnest Christian finds his own level, so to speak. It may leave unlimited degrees of higher fervour unreached and unattempted; and there is a conviction that if I felt a higher call I ought to obey it, and that if I fell below my present standards I should be degenerating and worthy of reproach.

EACH MAN'S STANDARD.

What is it that fixes this standard for each man; a standard which his conscience approves as adequate, and attaches to it on the other hand a sense of duty? The standard is nothing less than the practical ideal of what I ought to be *now*, not excluding a desire for progress towards the more abstract ideal of what I ought to strive for, and ultimately to become. Put bluntly, the general conviction is that I ought to be as good as I can, I ought to live up to my lights, I ought to be doing my *reasonable* level best—By reasonable I mean just what my limitations of health, strength and energy enable me to do, without getting into a "stew" over it, or overtaxing myself, or making life miserable and defeating my end; something I can keep steadily at all the time, and persevere into the end. And to this standard is attached a calm and real sense of duty, so that if ever I consciously fell below it without good reason, I should be degenerating; and the degeneration would have the tinge of sin on it. Even if it did not

issue in any specifically sinful act, it would have at least the look of a sin of omission, even if I could only specify the sin as that of "doing less than my best."*

THE MEANING OF VOCATION.

One of the lights coming to me in aid to a solution of the problem was this. Many years ago there occurred a discussion in a French theological journal on the meaning of vocation to the religious life. The first writer put forward the idea that a vocation was a personal and imperative call from God to the individual soul, which promised great fruits if obeyed, and serious peril even to salvation if it was ignored or disregarded—the sort of idea one sometimes hears, that a man who will save his soul in religion would lose it if he remained in the world, and so on.

Against this "mystical" treatment came a second writer who denied the imperative character of vocation. The higher life, he said, was the life of the counsels as contrasted with the commandments. It was an invitation, not a summons; an offer, not a demand. Its acceptance was altogether free, and was the embracing of an proffered privilege; it was something altogether optional, and not to accept it involved no sin or penalty except the loss of the spiritual advantages which would follow on acceptance. The grace of vocation was offered to all in general, except those who for some reason or other were disqualified or barred by pre-existing ties.

This writer argued as follows:—

We read in the Gospel of the young man who wished to enter eternal life and was told to keep the command-

* St. Thomas would find quite a number of names for the sin; tepidity, spiritual sloth, weariness in well doing, despondency, inconstancy and several others—all of which he boldly calls "sins" and "vices" and not mere imperfections—sins which at a certain point would become mortal.

ments ; and as he had kept them from his youth up, he asked what more was wanting. Our Lord replied: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me." The young man went sorrowful away, because he had great possessions. But there is no reason to suppose, as some pious writers trying to strain a point do suppose, that because he disregarded this invitation so personally and pointedly made to him, therefore he would lose his soul. In this gospel story all the theology of vocation is embodied; to enter eternal life the keeping of all the commandments is the sole necessary means. The aim at perfection is quite a separate thing ; and however desirable, it is purely optional.

I remember how during a discussion one of the young religious said : "If I had thought a vocation to religious life meant no more than that, I never should have persevered." "I don't believe it (he went on earnestly) : whatever dry theology may say. I stick to my old conviction. My vocation is to me much more than that. It grew upon me as a summons ; and if I abandoned it now I feel I should be an apostate, and would be going straight to the dogs."

PRIVATE INSPIRATIONS.

The thought suggested to me was this. Just as the Church is the repository of a public revelation, and does not take cognisance of or exercise any absolute jurisdiction over private revelations ; so likewise theology has to confine itself to the ontological department of faith and morals looked at objectively, and has to leave the subjective department of personal vocation aside as outside her ken. A vocation is a matter between the individual soul and God. It may come as a simple invitation, or it may come as a private command. In the latter

case it carries with it a sense of personal obligation and conscientious duty, so that to ignore it or disregard it would really be against conscience and constitute a sin against the light, even though no penalty or direct punishment be attached to it, except the loss of the benefits which would follow. If a man should happen to lose his soul in consequence of having ignored such a vocation, this would be due to specific sin committed afterwards, which by following the vocation he would have avoided. It would not be due *formally* or *directly* to his not having obeyed the call.

Thus in the subjective or psychological order we can find a class of commandments which are really such, although not binding under express precept; dictates of conscience, the disobedience to which involves conscious deordination in the soul; a turning aside from God, a rejection of his gifts, a forfeiture of privileges, to the present detriment of spiritual character and the probabilities of consequent degeneration which at least runs the risk of disaster and ruin in the end. A man in such condition might well say to himself: "God has put my hand to the plough, and yet I am looking back; God has strewn pearls before me, and I am proving myself a swine!"

A PHILOSOPHY OF VOCATION.

Then a further thought occurred to me. I remember well (said Herr Schneebels) my first amateur attempt at philosophy. It came to me naturally just after my conversion to the Church. That conversion was not the outcome of any reasoned process, but bore all the marks of a personal call; an invitation so imperative, so definite and clear that it amounted to a personal command. It was just as if I had been Matthew sitting at the seat of custom, and Christ had passed by and said: "Follow

me." And my failure to follow would have been a flat refusal: "No I wont."

My mind began ruminating on the idea of vocation. Not specific vocation to the Church or to the priesthood or to a religious order, but vocation as God's particular design regarding each and every man, by which his whole life-work was planned out for him and providentially arranged for. Then all a man needed was an amenable mind and a flexible disposition to follow the lights and inspirations which moved him; a disposition to embrace the opportunities that came before him, and the stimulus to his faculties which they presented to him. Providence would do the rest, and "shape our ends rough-hew them how we will."

As a luminous idea it seemed attractive, but as a philosophy nebulous. Personal "vocations" may be genuine or fictitious. They may come from God, from the devil, from imagination or fancy, or from mania. Being purely subjective they need some outside check, some criterion of judgment, some test, some way of discerning the spirits, so to speak. Outside the Church no such check exists, hence religious enthusiasm can take the most extravagant forms. Inside the Church there are checks in abundance: theology, dogmatic and moral, the accumulated experience of ascetics, the discipline of the Church, the general standards of the Catholic consciousness.

CRITERIA OF VOCATION.

If there is nothing in a man's personal "vocation" which comes in conflict with these, the presumption is that the "spirit" comes from God; or at least if it comes naturally from a man's inner consciousness without any divine intervention, the presumption is that it is on right lines. On this point theology or philosophy exist as

criteria, but they cannot go further. They cannot penetrate into the inner consciousness of a man and formulate its workings and draft rules and regulations for it. They have to confine themselves to their proper scope, and busy themselves with what is public property: the objective verities of the Christian revelation. The doctrines of the faith, the divine laws of conduct, the virtues and the vices; what binds under sin and what does not for the whole of mankind. Hence they can formulate exactly the precepts which bind under sin, but cannot say anything of precepts falling under other categories of which they know nothing. If such exist, they can only be personal and private, bound up with the individual conscience, and subject neither to public analysis nor public judgment. The only obligation they know are those of the commandments; and the rest, precisely because not formulated as commandments, they can only call counsels—things recommended but not imposed by any general or public law of God or of the Church.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XV. VOCATION AND IDEALS.

Or course it is impossible to ignore the fact that there does exist among the generality of serious Christians, a sense of obligation, binding them far more extensively than the bare commandments of God and of the Church. Put before them the ultimate conclusions of casuistry which reduce obligations to the absolute minimum, and they would shrink from the idea of lowering themselves to such standards. They would think them quite unworthy of a decent Christian. Theologians themselves would cordially agree with them in this, and would say that such legalistic minimisings are never intended as a Christian's rule of life. But more than this; the average good Christian would feel that the Christian profession obliges him to live far above such standards; and it is just this sense of obligation, of strict duty which cannot be pooh-poohed, and has to be explained.

One of my attempts at explanation (continued Herr Schneebels) is contained in the philosophy of the ideal, and of a personal vocation to an ideal. I mean a real vocation; not a mere liking or attraction, but an inspirational call of God to the soul; something analogous to grace as we picture it, and yet something distinct from the ordinary system of actual and habitual grace as explained in theology. Perhaps one might call it a specific grace having a specific function, namely, to present a man with some particular ideal to aspire to, some particular goal to aim at, giving rise to a stable and persistent attitude of mind which shall dominate his life as a whole and give it a consistent standard and tendency—some-

thing which will determine what a man shall make of himself by degrees.

THE LIGHT THAT ENLIGHTENETH.

Have you (asked Herr Schneebels) ever pondered on that verse in St. John's Gospel which speaks of the Word as "the light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world?" The statement is all comprehensive—*every man*; therefore it does not allude to any special light given to Christians. It is seemingly a supernatural light, a special activity of God working on the human mind. It seems to mean clearly that men are not left to their natural lights merely; not left to form their ideals and programmes of life merely out of the impressions produced by natural objects around them. It seems to teach us the existence of an inspirational force at work on every mind, working no doubt on natural materials of suggestion, reflection, attraction and repulsion, but taking these materials in hand, so to speak, and inspiring the mind with an additional and heavenly light to perceive the good, the better and the best, to feel its attractiveness, to respond to it, and thus to form ideals and programmes of conduct higher, better, and at any rate more clear, definite and stable than would, *ceteris paribus* be formed by the same man under the same circumstances if he were left to himself and his natural activities and susceptibilities to good.

This was just the notion which lay at the root of my juvenile vocation philosophy, which I was quite incapable of working out into a system then, and can hardly claim to have worked out into a system now.

THE SOURCE OF IDEALS.

Nevertheless it has given me what seems to be a luminous idea; and it is this. An ideal is not, or need not be,

merely a natural conception of possibilities of the better and the best, and a natural feeling of attraction and aspiration towards the same. An ideal can be, and presumably is, the heavenly product of that light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. And because of its heavenly origin, it comes upon a man clothed with divine authority, not as a mere suggestion or recommendation but as a command from one who has supreme right to command, and whom it is the duty of every creature to obey. To this command there is attached no threat of punishment, and yet to disobedience there is attached a sense of wrong-doing. If God condescends to offer to one of his creatures a gift, it is clearly his wish that the gift should be accepted with gratitude, appreciated, cherished and made the best possible use of. To disregard, contemn or ignore such a gift from such a source may not be exactly a sin subject to punishment, but it is an act of perversity which carries its punishment with it; which puts a man clearly in a wrong relation with his creator, and makes him undeserving of any further help or favour. A man who spurns the ideal which has been put into his mind by the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, deserves to have that light withdrawn from him permanently; and if that light is withdrawn and he is left to himself, heaven knows what depth of degeneracy may follow.

Hence the feeling of every serious Christian who has received the grace of a higher ideal, that such an ideal has the character of a divine command imposing an obligation and a duty of living up to it, so that it becomes a part of his conscience. This is what I call the higher conscience, because it lifts up the idea of duty to a higher plane, and gives it a wider extension than the ordinary conscience which is concerned only with specific

sin against the specific commandments of the formulated public code.

ANALYSIS OF IDEALS.

And now we come to the final analysis. An ideal is a phenomenon which has to be accounted for. We can find its explanation first in the natural constitution of the mind. The intellect is created with an instinct for the true and the good and the beautiful (which is only the true and the good brilliantly revealed and perceived in its splendour); and, given sufficient evolution of the higher powers, the attraction of the better and the best is instinctively felt.

But this merely explains the attraction. It does not explain that loyal devotion to ideals which gives rise to the sense of duty to live up to them. To the natural mind this sense of duty can only be defined by its object. Duty means something due—to somebody. People speak of their duty to themselves, to "Society" and to God. Duty to self can only mean a consciousness that I am created according to a certain type of being, with capabilities of self-development towards the perfection of that type. My faculties and opportunities are means and instruments offered to me for use in this upward process, and I owe it to myself to use them to the best of my ability. Secondly, duty to "Society" is an expression of the spirit of benevolence. As my higher instincts drive me to seek the better and the best in myself, so do they drive me to seek the better and the best in others. This benevolence can only be explained by the radical instinct for the true and good as a transcendental instinct, a love for the true and the good wherever found, and wherever possible, whether in self or in others: *Bonum est diffusivum sui.*

But the idea of duty is not so far adequately explained.

If duty means something due to somebody, every duty on one side must correspond to some right on the other side. The idea of the rights of self, imposing duties on self, is too elusive to explain anything; for rights can be renounced, or left in abeyance and not exacted; and as soon as this happens duties lapse. I owe duties to myself precisely so far as I myself exact them—and so the whole notion evaporates in smoke. The rights of other people, and especially of other people in general (which we call Society) are again extremely limited, and furnish only a very small part of a general ideal—just that part where the non-fulfilment of the ideal would do others an injury; and it would only concern the few individuals close around me who would be injured thereby. Thus very little can be got out of this point either, as regards the sense of duty.

THE BACKGROUND OF IDEALS.

But as soon as you introduce God the creator, lord and master of mankind, you begin to stand on solid ground. Inadequate ideas about God will of course lead to inadequate ideas of duty towards him. Picture him merely as a being of power, who can impose his will upon creatures, and exact submission and obedience to that will, and can and will punish resistance or disobedience—and your idea does not rise much beyond that of slavery. No love, no loyalty, no generosity, no devotion is called for. It is a matter of police laws only, and the penalties attached to infringement of those laws.

Next picture God as a benevolent master with servants under him to whom He wishes well, and then the spirit of willing service begins to enter in, and his laws will be obeyed with a spirit of loyalty and devotion, out of a desire to return benevolence for benevolence by pleasing him and not displeasing him.

Finally picture God as more than all this ; as the very essence of goodness, who out of his goodness has made us and given us to be all that we are, and the power to do all that we can do ; and immediately we are overwhelmed with a sense of indebtedness which we can never repay. The least we can do in way of a return is to *be* the best we can and *do* the best we can, so as to realise in ourselves all that He has given us the power to realise—so that, to use a human expression, we shall be a credit to our maker and not a disgrace. If we find that we begin in imperfection, with powers and opportunities to rise towards perfection. we can easily infer that it is his desire that we should make every use of our faculties, and take every advantage of our opportunities, to realise to the full all the possibilities of self-improvement which He has put it in our power to conceive and to feel the attraction of. We feel instinctively that God deserves all this ; that it is owing to him that we should do our best.

This leads us to form an estimate of what to aspire to ; and this we call our ideal. And then we do our best to attain it. The very power of conceiving such an ideal is in itself a gift of God ; and the motive of that gift must be a wish on the part of God that we should make the best possible use of that gift, which is not to amuse ourselves by contemplating it, but to set ourselves at work to realise it. But in so great a being, possessing such fundamental rights over us, a wish is as good as a command, the fulfilment of which we feel to be our bounden duty—something which is due to God as the largest return we can make to him for all He has done for us. It is an inadequate return, but it is at least the best we can offer.

THE CHURCH AND IDEALS.

Christianity comes in upon the order of nature as a

special communication from heaven; first as an objective system of revelation proposed to mankind in general, and secondly as a personal message to each individual soul. The Church was instituted as the vehicle of the objective revelation made through Christ. She has no direct cognisance of subjective revelations to the individual made through the Holy Spirit; for *gratia non cadet sub perceptione*, and *de internis non judicat praetor*. Hence the Church's attitude with regard to private revelations is to leave them alone, except so far as they are protruded forth and offered, so to speak, to the public. Even then the Church's judgment merely falls on the question whether such alleged revelations are consistent with or in conflict with her official deposit, or whether in practical effect they are detrimental or beneficial to popular devotion. If they stand this test, the Church's verdict merely amounts to a *nil obstat* and *imprimatur*. which is either a totally neutral attitude, or at most an encouragement of the negative order.

The same applies to any spiritual inspirations, real or alleged, which may come to the individual soul in the way of a vocation or ideal. When a vocation impinges on the outward life of the Church, such as a vocation to the priesthood or a religious order, or the taking of a vow involving external action, the Church applies the ordinary tests of prudence, and gives her *nil obstat*. But she does not undertake to pronounce positively on the soundness of the vocation, which is left to the individual conscience in the long run. If such a vocation remains private, and does not impinge on the public life of the Church, the only way in which the Church can intervene is in the entirely unofficial channel of private spiritual direction. The tests of dogmatic and moral theology having been applied, the rest remains with the indivi-

dual conviction. If a man tells a spiritual director that his ideal is impressed upon him as a call or as a command, and he feels that obedience to it is a duty binding on conscience, the director can only reply: "Your ideal is safe and admirable, but as far as the revealed laws of God and the Church go there is no obligation to follow it, and above all not under sin. Your programme remains officially to the Church as merely among the counsels; as something to be approved and recommended. The sense of obligation which you feel remains entirely between yourself and God."

MUTABILITY OF IDEALS.

"There is no harm, but good, in your entertaining such a sense of duty as an obligation, provided you do not elevate it into an absolute law. For it may be that in course of time you may change. The ideal itself may be modified, and you may feel yourself settling down to something less strenuous; and in fact circumstances may advise this. In that case you must not be allowed to think that you are apostatising in any way, or turning your back on God or Christ. You have always the official theology of the Church to fall back on, as affording you safe ground. In short you must recognise the subjective nature of your present convictions. You must not obstinately fix your mind on the idea of having had a private revelation, or a private vocation of an unquestionable nature which has fixed your ideals and the conduct of life once for all.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh from above from the father of lights, in whom there is no change or shadow of turning. But if there is no change in him, there may be change in you. The good and perfect gift which you have received now may itself undergo change as time goes on. There may be and certainly

is a heavenly and supernatural element in every aspiration to the better which a man may receive; but the heavenly gift may be, and probably is, only a superimposition on some ideal of the natural order which is merely the product of your own inner consciousness; and if in course of time your natural conception changes, the permeating grace which accompanies it may change accordingly." Hence (concluded Herr Schneebels) there can be no possible harm, and is sure to be much good in entertaining a supernatural view of your ideals, and of your higher sense of duty over and above the strict obligations of the commandments binding under sin and punishment. The only thing is, you must cherish the idea with modesty, humility and reverence, and not with self-complacency, pride and presumption, as if you had become a special temple of the Holy Ghost and a chosen vessel of election. If you get into that state of mind you will be thanking God you are not as other men, like the pharisee in the temple, and develop superciliousness towards others who have a weaker ideal than yourself, and perhaps a spiritual obstinacy which will turn your ideals and aspirations into a delusion and a snare.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XVI. POSITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

ONE of the most important pieces of advice which Herr Schneebels used to give to young priests before they left the College was this:—Impress on yourself first, in order that you may habitually impress it on others, the positive character of the Christian life. I fancy a good deal of unintentional harm is done to the minds of undiscriminating Christians by the common distinction between the commandments and the counsels, and the saying that the life of the ordinary Christian consists in keeping the commandments and that the counsels are for those aspiring to perfection. Of course anyone can see that this is a very inadequate statement of the case; but still, it has got stereotyped into a formula which is repeated without reflection; and I am persuaded that it leads to a deal of misunderstanding.

UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS.

Herr Schneebels was fond of repeating that saying of the Gospel: "When you have done all that is commanded, you are still unprofitable servants." The commandments except two [Sabbath, and parents] are all prohibitions of sins, and a man might (theoretically at least) keep all the commandments and yet not have a touch of Christianity about him—he would be, or might be, just a sinless pagan. The Christian is essentially something quite different from that—as shown by the fact that a man can be a true Christian and yet a frequent sinner at the same time. Sin or avoidance of sin, however important, is an incidental thing, a property of single acts performed or abstained from. Christianity is on the contrary a permanent thing, the embodiment of an ideal and a

set of principles dominating the mind, and thence dominating the life as a whole. Sinfulness or sinlessness is a mere fact, while Christianity is a character; and a character can be permanently there all the time, even with incidental lapses from the ideal or breaches of the principle.

The parable of the talents gives us the positive side of the same idea. The money distributed by the master was given in trust, with a duty to use it to his advantage; and an account to be rendered on his return. The servant who made no use of his talent was condemned, though he had kept the money safe. Hence it is quite common for earnest Protestants to turn this parable into a principle, viz: "I am bound to make good use of the talents which God has given me." This idea they extend to every kind of faculty and opportunity they possess, both as to their temporal career in life, and their religion, charity, and moral conduct—to make the best of themselves all round, because God has endowed them with gifts and responsibilities which make it their duty to do so. It is not enough to lead a merely blameless life, by abstention from sin; our lives must mean positive effort and positive progress, taking what opportunities come before us of "doing good," for this is expected of us as Christians.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Christianity as a life essentially means Christ as my teacher, my leader and my model; Christ as my ideal, my exemplar and my stimulus. No one would call it merely a counsel or a piece of advice that men shall believe in Christ and be baptised in his name—for he that believeth not shall be condemned. It is not a mere counsel that men should become His disciples: and yet in order to become a disciple a man must take

up his cross and follow him—which therefore is no mere counsel either. It is no mere counsel but a commandment—at once an old and *new* commandment—that ye love one another. By this men shall know that ye *are* my disciples, that ye love one another. It is no mere counsel that we shall be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect—at least as a matter of aspiration and endeavour under human limitations. Finally the duty to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength, is not a mere counsel but the first and greatest of the commandments. All these things and many others in the Gospels, and numberless passages in the Epistles, show that Christ puts before men something far beyond merely keeping the commandments in the sense of abstaining from sin. He puts it forward not merely as a friendly piece of advice, not merely as the expression of an ardent wish, but as an expression of a master's will :—"This is the will of God, your sanctification"—and therefore as an imposition of duty.

There is nothing novel in what I am saying (continued Herr Schneebels). It is only recalling the fact that if we have done all that is commanded (*i.e.* kept the ten commandments merely) we are still unprofitable servants. It is only expressing the fact of human consciousness, that the idea of *duty*, in any man imbued with Christian ideas, transcends a long way the notion of avoiding mortal sin, or of trying to avoid all sin for the matter of that. It is only emphasing the fact that the absence of sin is a negative thing, while the Christian rule of life is quite a positive thing.

OUR INDEBTEDNESS.

We must never forget that our indebtedness to God as creator (which is the basis of our obligation with regard to the commandments) is highly accentuated by our in-

debtedness to God as our redeemer who has elevated us to the adopted sonship with a heavenly destiny of the supernatural order before us.

It was already our duty to God as creator, not merely to observe those regulations, to default of which he has attached punishments; but furthermore to render to him praise, love and service with our whole heart and soul and mind and strength—which, observe, is not merely a counsel, but a command; the first and greatest of the commandments. But if this is true of our relation of duty towards God as our creator, we must naturally expect an intensification of our duties emerging from relations to God as our redeemer and sanctifier. Our Catholic instincts quite clearly tell us this. Well-trained and well-disposed Christian people have a sense of duty which extends far beyond the things which are laid down as commandments binding under sin. Sin does not seem to enter into the question at all; and yet they will talk of what they believe to be their duty as Christians, and would feel guilty of a breach of duty as Christians if they did not live up to those standards. And they really mean duty; something which is incumbent on them and strictly due to God or to Christ. They do not look upon themselves as living according to counsels, or as following good advice, or embracing something which is merely recommended, or accepting an invitation to higher things which is optional. They feel the impress of duty or obligation weighing upon them in these matters, quite as definitely as the duty or obligation not to kill or steal or commit adultery. They do not imagine that by omitting these "duties" of the higher order they would incur hell, or even purgatory: but they feel that, by becoming Christians, they have made themselves followers of Christ, and that the fol-

lowing of Christ means a serious endeavour to adopt Christ as their standard and model, and try to verify his teaching and spirit in all parts of their life and conduct. They consider that just as by refusing to become Christians they would be doing gravely wrong, so by failing to set Christ's example and teaching before them they are failing to fulfil the obligations of their discipleship, and therefore definitely doing wrong in not living up to their vocation; and that by such failure they would deserve punishment, even though no specific and declared punishment is attached to their failure. In short, they feel that their vocation to be a Christian carries with it real obligation, of duties far higher and more extensive than those which are comprised in the commandments which bind specifically under sin, and to which the punishment of purgatory or hell is attached.

What I have described is quite a real experience of well-disposed and earnest Christians all the world over. You all feel it, I am sure. It describes the mentality in which you have been brought up from childhood. I feel it, and it describes mine.

DIFFICULTY OF ANALYSIS.

And yet as soon as one tries to bring it under scientific analysis, one begins to find a simple idea expanding into a group of complex and baffling ones.

The first reason for this complexity is the fact that the sense of higher duty is more or less subjective matter, an individual matter which cannot be generalised or put into categories or under rules. Nor is it a matter on which one man can judge another. With the commandments everything is definite, clear and objective. They are with one exception (Sabbath law) the elemental dictates of the natural law, which are recognised by humanity at large. Everybody can recog-

nise their imperative character, and the sinfulness of breaking them, and the punishment due to breaking them, and therefore the necessity, the duty of observing them.

THE VAGUENESS OF THE POSITIVE.

But as soon as you put aside the question of obligation under sin, everything becomes vague. You are dealing with the virtues which are positive; capable of definition in their essence, but admitting of every conceivable grade. As you learn in elementary ethics, the radical rule of morality "Malum evitandum bonum assequendum," requires a distinction. You are bound to avoid all moral evil; you are not bound to follow all moral good. The obligation about avoiding evil is quite easy to comprehend; it is circumscribed severely, and extends only to a number of specified acts which are forbidden. But good is an all-comprehensive, almost infinite thing; there seems no limit to it. Tell a man he is obliged to avoid moral evil, and with ordinary good-will he is able to do it; for the occasions of evil which present themselves as a temptation are not constantly occurring; a man may go a whole day, sometimes a whole week, without such an occasion pressing itself upon him. But tell a man he is obliged to embrace good, and he is instantly lost in an unlimited field. For one sin a man can commit there are a hundred acts of virtue he might practise. Thus a man must not hate God—that is clear and simple. Probably he will go through his whole life without feeling the least inclination to do anything so awful. But tell him he must love God—That is a thing he can be doing every waking moment of his life; and if he takes things seriously he will soon go mad in his endeavours to cope with the obligation. The same with most other virtues of the general sort: prudence, justice, fortitude,

temperance, charity, gratitude, benevolence, self-sacrifice, zeal, devotion, self-control, mortification—However much you practise them there is always a possibility of more. There must be a selection ; we have other things to do ; we cannot always be on the strain ; we must take the opportunities that obtrude themselves upon us, and are obvious and feasible ; and, except for a special effort or special sacrifice now and then we must leave the rest alone. We must feel quite comfortable and easy in mind, knowing that although we are not doing all the good things that offer themselves to be done, still we are not obliged to do them either.

NO WATERING DOWN.

This does not mean that the first and greatest of the commandments is to be watered down or explained away. Its absolute nature must always be upheld without the least qualification as a standard, not only of aspiration but also of endeavour. The only qualification allowed is actually contained in the terms : "With *all* thy heart,..mind,..soul,..strength," which introduces at once the idea of human limitations, equivalently to saying: "You must love God *as much as you can.*" But how much can a man love God ? According to philosophy love is a response to the perceived loveability of the object, and is limited by the limits of the perception. But in different men this perception will vary considerably, from a very slight and weak realisation to a very strong and vivid realisation—and the *power* to love God will vary accordingly, whether with heart or mind or soul or strength.

This is the initial limitation : Love cannot rise above appreciation, just as water cannot rise above its own source. It is true that appreciation can be enhanced by mental effort, and in this way love can be increased "by

practice" so to speak. But there are limits to the amount of effort a man is capable of; not only in physical but also in mental matters. There are young people who can never excel in games: first because they lack the spontaneous energy which makes them take to games naturally; and secondly, they lack the strength and power of endurance needed for successful practice. The lack of spring and stimulus makes practice laborious, and therefore painful, and consequently exhausting; so they have to give it up as too hard for them.

HUMAN LIMITATIONS.

It is pretty much the same in the spiritual life. Some take to it naturally and easily (whether through temperament or special grace is irrelevant to our present thought) and can make headway at once, and flourish on it. Others (possibly quite as good people as the foregoing) find all spiritual exercises a labour, and soon feel exhausted; and if they make deliberate efforts on reflex principles they knock themselves up, and feel that the burden is intolerable, and life is not worth living, and so on; and they have to content themselves with a very simple and limited spiritual programme, doing the little they can do steadily and well, or as steadily and well as they can under the circumstances: humbly doing their "little best," and not upsetting the balance of their mind by ambitioning more. If such people *habitually* avoid mortal sin and even deliberate venial sin, one is bound to allow that they are doing very well. They are practically loving God with their whole heart and mind and soul and strength; and though they do not make a brilliant show, they have a grasp of solid reality, and may in the sight of God stand on an equal footing with their more enthusiastic and progressive compeers. For it must never be forgotten that the one sup-

reme rule by which men are to be judged is the equation between opportunities and achievements; namely how far a man is living up to his lights and acting up to his powers and opportunities. If any given man is, according to a prudent and reasonable estimate, "doing his level best" I do not say that he is a perfect man by any means, for he may be labouring under serious limitations and defects. But relatively to these limitations he is an integral man, seeing that he is doing all that in him lies; and even God almighty cannot reasonably expect him to do more. Hence it is that the Church looks with complacency on the multitude of her members who are "living the life of the commandments," and considers them sound and satisfactory Christians. For after all, if the life of the commandments is held to mean *habitual* freedom from mortal sin, and from deliberate venial sin as well, the standard cannot certainly be called a low one; and in fact, it is a standard calling for congratulation. For it means habitual conformity to the will of God in all things in which he has made his will expressly known, and imposed it upon mankind as a duty. It is no small praise to say of a man that he "never fails in his duty," either in things great or small. Even if there occur incidental failures, these, if duly repented of, are not sufficient to cancel the habitual disposition and attitude of mind which dominate that man's life, and determine his general relation to God. They are only another illustration of the limitations of the human mind and will even among those who, broadly speaking, are well-disposed.

CONCLUSION.

I think it important to emphasise these commonplaces of our ascetical theology, lest by our insistence on the standard of perfection embodied in the first and greatest

commandment we should seem to be imposing a burden which the human spirit, in its tens of thousands, would feel itself unable to bear. That sublime precept, though it ought to be assiduously preached, should never be presented so as to become a stumbling block of discouragement, but always as a source of comfort to all who are conscious of trying to do their reasonable best, and a stimulus to go on trying to do a little better. At the same time it should never be "watered down" so as to make people feel complacent if they are satisfied with less than their reasonable best. It ought rather come as a shock and a terror to all slackers and shirkers, and leave them with a bad conscience till they conceive a determination in future to live up to whatever light and strength God has bestowed upon them.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XVII. REDUCED TO PRACTICE.

A NOTE OF ALARM.

"We have been talking high about ideals and vocations and strivings after an obligatory perfection," said Tomkins, "and it has struck me that any ordinary Christian listening to us would get rather frightened at the programme put before him. The first and greatest commandment, looked at fair and square as a real commandment applied straight to *me*, is nothing short of overwhelming to begin with ; and that doctrine of St. Thomas with his long list of virtues, with their numerous contrary vices and sins, soon becomes positively bewildering. It looks as if a man would have nothing to attend to all day except spirituality and virtues, and avoidance of hun-

dreds of small failures in virtue and lapses into vice; and if he took it all seriously he would either have to shut himself up in a Trappist monastery, or other people would sooner or later have to shut him up in a madhouse. I don't suppose it really means all that, but it certainly looks it at any rate."

From the speculative point of view no doubt (replied Herr Schneebels). But practically nothing is needed but to look at the matter through the psychological binoculars, and then reduce your psychology to the practical concrete, and all difficulty will disappear. The psychological binoculars we have already looked through, and seen that in the actual moral life everything is measured not by what we can do in the abstract, but what we can do in the concrete. Secondly, what we can do in the concrete is limited to just what we *feel* that we can do, and *see* that we can do at a given moment. Thirdly, this again is limited once more by prudential foresight based on a knowledge of our own powers of endurance—not merely what we can do at one given moment, but what we can do repeatedly and keep up doing without wearing ourselves out or making life a bugbear.

CONCENTRATION VS. DISTRIBUTION.

Some years ago a group of us were making geological excavations in a cave—digging for mammoth bones and that sort of thing—and we got in a local labourer or two to do the rough pick-and-shovel work for us. We soon got impatient at the slow, easy-going way in which they worked, and took up the pick and shovel ourselves just to show them how to get on faster. "Look now" we said, "In five minutes we have got through more work than you have done in an hour!" "Ay! Sir," replied the yokel stolidly: "You might work

like that for an hour, but you couldn't work like that for a week!" Subsequent events proved the truth of this mild sally. That five minutes' strenuous effort had taken it out of us so much that we did but little the rest of that day, and woke up stiff next morning.

Much the same with the spiritual life; we have to spread our strength over a life-time and cannot afford to concentrate it into an hour. "Doing our best" does not mean the best we can do in one minute, but the best we can persevere in day by day. It is forgetfulness of this simple elementary truth that strews the higher walks of the ascetical life with so much wreckage and heaps of debris, especially in the enthusiastic beginnings.

This gives us the first practical rule. "Doing our best" does not mean our *concentrated* best, but our *distributed* best—the amount we can spread over a life-time, not the amount we can concentrate into a day. Special "spurts" can be thrown in on occasion, but the thing to reckon on and make habitual is that which we can practice regularly or continuously, with serenity and without strain.

TAKE WHAT COMES.

The second practical maxim is: Don't go hunting for opportunities, but make use of those that come in your way—If you have your eyes open, they will give you plenty to do. You can practise ten acts of charity (or fall into ten faults against charity) during an evening in the family circle, while attending a philanthropic meeting will give you little chance to practise even one. Or again, to be on your best behaviour with your own people at home (instead of reserving it for outsiders, as is so often the case) will involve a far more profitable kind of mortification and self-denial than fasting twice a week.

GENERAL DISPOSITIONS.

A third practical maxim is, cultivate general dispositions and general attitudes of mind; for when these are secured they will issue in action, and details will look after themselves. It is the philosophy of the habit issuing easily in acts. A mental habit of kindliness will issue in kindly thoughts, and then in kindly manners and in kindly acts, without any troublesome reflection. A mental habit of being master of oneself will make self-control instinctive as soon as an occasion arises calling for self-control. A mental habit of thoroughness will make it instinctive to do things thoroughly, and so on. The very idea of not missing opportunities of doing a good thing will mean that opportunities are not missed. "The whole world is desolate because no one thinketh in his heart" sizes up this idea pretty well. And there is another verse: "If there be anything holy or good or chaste or seemly, think of these things"—which means that if you will only think of them you will soon start doing them.

In the same way, a habit of simply realising that God exists is a wonderful source of spiritual vitality. No need to tire your head over it, or work out any reflections. A learner on the bike will be wobbling badly along a lonely road, and cutting quite an undignified figure. But how instantaneously he will stiffen up and ride his best (quite successfully) as soon as he realises that someone is looking at him.

THE PLACE OF FEELINGS.

Next it is of prime importance to realise that although feeling and emotion do as a rule enter largely into religion, they enter *per modum concomitantiæ* as the scholastics express it—as an accompaniment only—and do not pertain to the substance, and are not in the least

degree necessary even to its completeness. Religion is essentially a matter of intellect and will—in the intellect perception and realisation of God and our relations to him, and in the will appreciation, acceptance and adhesion to the same.

The popular idea that religion is a matter of sentiment, emotion, feelings of enthusiasm, zeal, devotion, awe, reverence, affection, passion—as feelings—is due to two facts in psychology: first that these feelings are a natural accompaniment to religion, on account of our composite nature. Secondly that religious people are usually under the domination of such feelings, and would consider themselves irreligious without them—and again, that irreligious people are ready to explain their irreligiousness by saying that they have no feelings that way, or that religion does not appeal to them. The result is, when a religious-minded individual feels pious he practices religion with fervour; and when he does not feel pious he drops, or is tempted to drop religious practices, thinking that his religion is gone; and he will even get so far as to think it hypocrisy to say his prayers because he does not feel or *mean* what he says.

FEELING VS. MEANING.

There is just the fallacy. To *feel* is one thing, to *mean* is another. Take any ordinary incident in life, for instance, a choice whether to accept an invitation or refuse it. Three situations are possible: First as far as feelings and desires go I should dearly like to accept it; or secondly, I should dearly like to refuse it; or thirdly, as far as feelings are concerned I am altogether indifferent. Looking upon it quite calmly as a "business proposition" I make my decision, just choosing what I consider to be the right thing to do under the circumstances. I feel nothing one way or the other; but

when I make up my mind I *mean* it. It is purely a matter of intellect judging what is the right thing to do and the will acting accordingly, on account of my habitual attitude of mind and disposition to do the right thing. If there is any moral or religious significance in the act it is all to the good; an act of virtue, an act of religion deliberately adopted and performed for that reason. The presence of feeling would not add anything to the virtue, nor does the absence of feeling take anything from it. Rather it makes the act of virtue stand out more clear and more pure, just because it is an absolutely deliberate act of the rational will following the dictates of the intellect declaring what is the right thing to be done.

THE ACT OF CHARITY.

Now take the case of a man who, becoming conscious of God, deliberately takes up his prayerbook and recites the act of charity: "O my God I love thee with my whole heart and soul, etc.," meaning what he says. There is no more emotion or feeling about it than if he were to take up a volume of Geometry, and were to say "I love Euclid." And yet there is more solidity, more purity of virtue in the calm, deliberate recitation of that "act of charity" than there would be if he had felt himself impelled thereto by a tremendous gush of pious emotion. The state of emotion means that there is a force of sensitive feeling pushing him in a certain direction, and he simply gives way to it just because he feels the push. Quite good in its way; but it has nothing in it of the grandeur of a man who, pushed by nothing and pulled by nothing of the emotional order, simply stands face to face with the possibility of performing a high religious act, and by a pure self-determination lays himself to perform that act—solely and simply because

it is a good thing, a right thing to do, and he will not let the suggestion or the opportunity slip by.

Let your imagination wander over all the tales of splendour, brilliance and heroism you have ever heard or read of; great generals leading armies to victory at the point of the sword; glorious heroes, filled with patriotism, rushing to certain death; captains remaining last and going down with their ships; firemen rushing through flames to save a woman or child; glorious martyrs torn limbs from limb in defence of the faith. In these examples you will find the heroic exercise of many splendid virtues natural or supernatural, things that only a tremendously great soul could do or suffer. It looks like one fell swoop from the sublime to the ridiculous to come back to some simple ordinary mediocre man sitting on a garden chair, or even a child just old enough to know what it is about, to whom the thought of saying the "Act of Charity" comes casually in an unoccupied moment, and who, with no other impulse or motive except to do a good thing that offers itself, proceeds to say it and to mean it. And yet that simple, emotionless, commonplace act of charity, said and meant, is the highest possible act of virtue that any creature can perform; while all those other blazing brilliant heroic acts just described *are only equal to it just so far as they contain it*, and only because they contain it. Yet how simple, how easy; costing nothing of effort, nothing of pain, nothing of sacrifice; requiring no education, no training, no cleverness, but only sufficient intellect to understand what the words mean and to appreciate their excellence, and sufficient will to say them and to mean them when said.

It is a tremendously helpful thought to souls subject to discouragement or doubt, or bewildered with too

complex an idea of religion, or overwhelmed and oppressed by too complicated an apparatus of devotions; over-earnest souls, scrupulous souls, timid and meticulous souls.

A CLOAK OF MALICE.

But on the other hand, it is a thought which might easily be misunderstood and even misused by persons of another type—the lax, the tepid, those who are trifling with sin or worldliness, who want to save their souls at the cheapest rate and to enjoy the sins and pleasures of this world without missing the happiness of the next. You know the sort I mean—people who will sin the easier because they can put it all right by confession, and who will care little about the sincerity of their contrition, still less about their purpose of amendment, and even be shifty and evasive in the confession itself, so long as they can secure the words of absolution and then think it is all right. These are the people who will formulate a prayerful protest against a sin while in the very act of committing it, and think that by doing so they save themselves from the guilt; people who will say to themselves "I don't consent" while in reality they are consenting; people who will declare to themselves "I can't help it" when in reality they can help it and are only making their protestations the cloak to their malice, or at least to their weakness. A fine thing for such people to get hold of the idea that by deliberately saying the "Act of Charity" and meaning it they are performing the most perfect and highest act of religion, and thereby putting themselves in the easiest possible way into right relations with God as often as they like, no matter how wrong their relations may be at other times.

ACTS VS. HABITS.

That is why we have to realise the isolated nature of

an act, as compared with the continuous and permanent nature of a habit. That is why St. Thomas makes his moral theology consist in a study of habits, and not a study of acts—the acts being merely isolated expressions of the habit. Even an isolated act of virtue has its value, but it does not constitute a life; and both religion and morality, to have permanent effects, must be a life, and not merely a number (smaller or greater) of isolated acts. The reason is because an isolated act has no bearings outside itself unless it either *proceeds from* a permanent attitude of mind and will, *or inaugurates one.*

If on a certain occasion a man is asked whether he will take a glass of beer, and answers: "No," that act by itself means nothing but the bare negative. But if it proceeds from regular habit of never drinking beer, it means a good deal. It is the expression of a habit; perhaps the thousandth expression of a habit consistently kept up. Again, if that "No" embodies a break with the past, and the first effect of a resolution to stop drinking beer in future, that again means a great deal; for it expresses an attitude of mind newly adopted, which by perseverance and permanency will become a habit.

So in like manner, that deliberate recitation of the "Act of Charity" on a given occasion, being sincere, will be a perfect act in itself; but it will have very little significance in life unless it expresses an attitude of love already established in the soul as a habit, or inaugurates an attitude of love which will be maintained hereafter, with a tendency to bear fruit in other acts.

MENTAL PRECISION.

One of the most interesting powers of the human mind (which forms a short chapter in logic) is the power to prescind (praecisio mentalis). Prescinding from the

deadly effects of beer on my health I can say that I like beer; but taking that deleterious feature into account I hate it like poison. Similarly during the war an Englishman was capable of the greatest courteousness and kindness to a German, by prescinding from the fact that he was a German. As soon as he thought of the man as a German he positively detested him.

Just the same thing might occur with that act of charity. A man might make an isolated act of the love of God in the way described, and mean it quite seriously at the moment, prescinding from the fact that his life in general was something quite inconsistent with the words he was uttering. There might, for instance be on his soul a heavy burden of past sin not repented of; and if he realised that fact, he would see the necessity of going back on that load of sin, and making an act of contrition for it, in order to give consistency to his present attitude of mind and to give validity to his present act of divine love. If he neglected to do this, his attitude would be altogether inconsistent: "I love God with my whole heart, etc., yet I don't repent of the sin I have committed against Him." The lack of repentance would take the reality out of his present act of love, and reduce it to words and mere sentiments. Similarly if that act had no prospective value; if it did not lead to conduct consistent with the perfect love of God; if the man remained, by way of habit, ready to commit any sin which came in his way shortly afterwards; then again that isolated act, though of momentary value, would have no stable or permanent value. It would not really represent the state of his soul, but would be rather a transitory departure from an habitual condition of proneness to sin, altogether inconsistent with a genuine and effective love of God.

PRECARIOUSNESS OF MERE ACTS.

This is one of the reasons for the precariousness of death-bed repentances. A man who by habitual disposition and attitude of mind has been so indifferent to God as to live a life of ready indulgence in sin whenever the inclination came upon him, may, under a strong psychological impress in the presence of death, think of his duty and fall to reciting his prayers. In words he will make a perfect act of love and a perfect act of contrition; and he will also sincerely mean what he says, and wish his words to represent the attitude of his mind and will. But is the necessary attitude of mind and will really there? Is there really an interior change of soul which, in case he recovered from the danger, would persist as a new disposition and attitude of mind, the starting point of a new line of life? Unless it is all this, one is bound to feel very doubtful as to the value of that isolated act made merely in a state of fright. It may be sincere as far as it goes, but is it effectual in disestablishing an old bad relation, and inaugurating a new good relation between the soul and God? No one can tell *a priori:* its validity is possible, but at least it is highly precarious. Hence the common advice of safety: "Place no reliance on an isolated act at the end of life; but let your whole life be such that death will not take you by surprise."

Philosophically (concluded Herr Schneebeis) the moral of what I have just been saying is to make us realise the vital importance of permanent dispositions and attitudes of mind in the scheme of life and destiny; or in other words, the essential importance of habits rather than acts.

HEER SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XVIII. CONSCIENCE.

Moral theology (said Herr Schneebels) looks upon conscience from the legal or forensic point of view, and treats it as an intellectual judgment on the facts of law; while psychology looks upon conscience rather as a function of the mind imposing itself on the will, and studies the actual workings of that function.

THE SUBJECTIVE NORM.

Moral theology provides the frame-work into which the psychology of conscience can be fitted. It lays down the principle that the dictate of conscience is *subjectively* the absolute norm of personal conduct; so much so that even if the dictate is erroneous, still it must be followed implicitly—so long as the erroneousness remains undetected. This means that whatever the conscience as a judgment pronounces to be right, can or must be done just because it presents itself as right; and whatever it pronounces to be wrong must not be done, just because it presents itself as wrong. In this way conscience is objectively fallible as to the *thing* presented; but it is subjectively infallible as to the *attitude* which our will should and must take towards the thing *as* presented. Even if the thing is presented falsely—that is, as right when objectively it is wrong, or as wrong when it is objectively right—there is only one moral course for the will to pursue, and that is to obey the imperative dictate which commands, allows or forbids. To take the contrary course—to set the will in one direction when conscience dictates the other—means sin and guilt just because of the opposition. For the dictate of conscience consists precisely in saying: "There must

be perfect identity between conscience and volition, just as the image in a mirror must be identical with the reality." The slightest discrepancy means guilt, sin, self-condemnation—venial or mortal according to the degree or kind of discrepancy, and also the deliberateness of the act; or in other words, the realisation of the discrepancy, and of the power to avoid it.

DIFFERENT STATES OF CONSCIENCE.

Secondly, moral theology refers briefly, by way of classification, to the distinctions between a blunt conscience, a tender conscience, a scrupulous conscience, a hardened conscience and a blinded conscience.

A tender conscience means one which responds quickly to the object presented, and is highly alive even to the smaller forms of wrong doing, and vivid in its pronouncements. It also generally means a keen susceptibility in the feelings, which are deeply affected by the delight of well-doing or the misery of evil-doing; which are elated by the approval of conscience and depressed by its disapproval, and easily overwhelmed by even the slightest sense of guilt. The tender conscience approximates nearly to what I call the "higher conscience," though it does not perhaps cover the whole ground.

A blunt conscience, on the contrary, corresponds to the lower conscience more or less—with the implication that it is *decidedly* low, lacking in the perception of wrong unless it is grossly obtrusive.

A scrupulous conscience is, one might say, a tender conscience gone wrong through the intrusion of an ill-regulated imagination. It is nowadays coming to be recognised as a form of mental derangement of the neurasthenic kind, with its "phobes" and "phils" or compulsory fears and impulses, fixed or compulsory

ideas, and manias. The subject is a pathological one, and can be left aside for the present, as lying outside the range of a rational philosophy such as we are trying to arrive at.

The hardened and the blinded conscience give us the fullest scope for psychological study. They are two altogether different things, the first defect having its seat in the feelings, the second in the intellect. Expressed in the briefest possible way: (1) If a man who is guilty of sin could say "I don't *feel* it" that would be a hardened conscience. (2) If he could say "I don't *see* it" that would be a blinded conscience. (3) If the conscience is both hardened and blinded the formula would be: "I neither see nor feel it." Such a man can hardly be said to have any conscience left.

THE HARDENED CONSCIENCE.

Sin is defined by the *objective* wrong thing done—the transgression of the divine law. But *guilt* is subjective, and consists in the realised and wilful malice of the act; and that is the real sin—the real turning away of the will from God. This presupposes (1) A knowledge of the wrongness of the act, and a consciousness at the time that it is wrong. (2) The voice of conscience expressing the general principle, that no wrong act must be done; and *hic et nunc* this wrong act must not be done. (3) A consciousness of the power to choose, and thus to abstain from the wrong act.

There need not be anything emotional or exciting about the voice of conscience. Sufficient if it is a clear consciousness that the wrong act *is* wrong and is forbidden by the divine law. At the same time the stir of feeling which accompanies a normal, healthy conscience is a considerable help. Few people are strongly influenced by a purely intellectual idea when there are

strong feelings of the sensitive appetite pulling in the opposite direction. They need feelings to counteract feelings, as a rule ; and unless the good feelings are vivid and forcible, and produce a strong psychological impression, the tendency of the will is to yield to the far more vivid and forcible attractions of the forbidden object.

But there is another point. Feelings can be cultivated and attended to, or they can be ignored or repressed. This is true even of the strong feelings of the sensitive nature connected with the passions, which draw us into sin ; but it is still more true of those far more delicate feelings connected with the rational nature which we call "emotions." The shock, the apprehension of guilt attached to sin, is of this higher and more delicate kind ; it grows by cultivation, but is easily "discouraged." "Commit the same sin twice, and you will think it no harm," says some old sage—I think in the *Talmud*. In a well-trained, well-disciplined nature, to whom sin is an abnormal occurrence, an act of violence against habit, these emotions will be quite effectual against any ordinary temptation. A first fall will create a tremendous disturbance of feeling which will be a natural safeguard for the future. After a second fall the disturbance will be less. The mind is getting familiar with the idea of going against conscience ; and familiarity breeds contempt, or at least callousness and indifference.

The same effect will be produced by living in surroundings full of sin. "Everybody does it ; nobody seems to think anything of it, and why should I ?" Even if the answer comes, "Because it is wicked ;" nevertheless, wickedness begins to lose that shocking character which it had in days of innocence ; and so by degrees tempta-

tion, backed up by the precedent of previous falls or by the sanction of bad example, begins to be taken as a matter of course and yielded to as a matter of course—conscience still perhaps voicing itself, but in such a cold, abstract way as to create no psychological impression. The result is sin committed calmly, deliberately and without compunction, with little likelihood of repentance or purpose of amendment, and much likelihood of increasing repetition, which will soon grow into a habit.

This is the meaning of a hardened conscience. It differs from the blunt conscience only in the fact that it is induced by repeated sin. Properly it means the deadening of the feelings naturally attached to and aroused by conscience. These feelings, by being ignored or gone against, become callous and gradually disappear. Think of the repugnance to bloodshed with which a soldier goes first into the trenches, and the coolness with which he thinks and talks of killing the enemy when he has been there a week, and you will understand the deadening, hardening effect which follows from "getting used to it."

To cherish delicacy and tenderness of conscience in penitents, especially when one sees it gradually diminishing by sin, is one of the most important functions of the confessor so far as he has the chance of exercising it, especially in cases of those who are faithfully struggling with a besetting vice. On this one point depends, more than anything else, whether the besetting sin will diminish or increase. Once let the feelings get blunted by the familiarity of repetition, and there is little hope left. "To keep alive a tender conscience" is the chief grace that such a penitent should pray for.

THE BLINDED CONSCIENCE.

The hardened conscience naturally prepares the way for the blinded conscience. A man who through

familiarity with sin ceases to *feel* the sinfulness, will not be long in ceasing to *see* the sinfulness.

This blindness may possibly in some cases become complete. By reading quasi-philosophical books which undermine his faith a man may actually get into a sort of confidence that God does not exist, and then of course the whole meaning of sin is gone; or he may by habitual negligence cease to think of God at all. Short of this he may at least give up thinking about morality, and take it for granted that he should do as he likes. Or again, he may get imbued with the idea that such and such an action is not sin; it is justified by the imperious demands of nature; it is merely following a healthy, natural instinct; it does not really do any harm; in any case it is irresistible and one simply can't help it, etc. Or in another matter, bribes and sharp practice and deception are the order of the day; it is part of the game; everybody must do it if he wants to live, and so on. The consequence is, conscience simply ceases to speak. It neither enunciates any longer the general maxim that evil is never to be done, nor the particular judgment that this or that is evil. The faculty ceases to work because it has no material to work on; because the mind never adverts to the question of morality at all, or at least never in this or that connection.

That is the blinded conscience. If the blindness is complete (and in a given case it conceivably might be) the paradox will ensue that if a man only sins long and persistently enough, he becomes in the end incapable of sin. For sin, in its sense of guilt, is only possible so long as a man *sees* the guilt. As soon as he becomes absolutely blind to the guilt his sin becomes merely "material;" while he himself, by a singular atrophy of his conscience, has become for the time a non-moral

being. No man can get himself into such a state without a tremendous amount of guilt, or at least misguidance, in the past. Nor is it likely that he can remain in such a state for ever—something or other must shake him up again some time or other. Nor, finally, have we any knowledge whether a man can ever get into such a complete state of moral blindness—unless by becoming mad.

Normally speaking, therefore, the blindness of conscience will be only partial; enough to enable a man to go on comfortably in his sin; not enough to prevent him from being at least sub-consciously aware that there is such a thing as conscience after all; and he has not got rid of it altogether. And perhaps occasionally it will give him an uncomfortable time, when he is alone in the dark, or is in danger.

The fact that the blinded conscience grows out of the hardened conscience, suggests that probably the only way a man can recover the normal will be through a sudden psychological shock produced by some calamity, in which his better feelings will be awakened. As soon as he begins to *feel* again, he will begin to *see* again.

THE HIGHER AND LOWER CONSCIENCE.

Now the interesting question arises:—How far can we say that my pet "higher conscience" is identical with what theologians call a tender or delicate conscience; and secondly, how far can we say that "the lower conscience"—the normal conscience of the average man—is identical with a *partially* hardened or blinded conscience, or both?

"Come now," bubbled out Quinley: "That a poser. I hope you are not going to be too hard on the average man—I am only an average man myself, so please draw it mild."

"As mild as I can," replied Herr Schneebels with an amused smile. "But don't be alarmed, I'll keep you company. We are all 'average men' more or less; or at least we must assume ourselves to be, otherwise we shall have little chance of rising above the average—which is precisely the object of all this talk."

"Hardened" and "blinded" conscience are ugly names for something abnormal which men bring on themselves by perseverance in sin (Herr Schneebels proceeded). But take any limitation of conscience, either in the way of lack of feeling or lack of perception; and so far as the thing goes it is essentially the same, only less in degree, less in culpability, and perhaps without culpability at all. Take a bird's-eye view of any ordinary mediocre family with its multifarious defects in daily intercourse. Count up the little bickerings and quarrels, the outbursts of temper, the small exhibitions of spite and malice, the petty jealousies, the little deceptions, the back-biting and scandal-mongering talk—all of which are at least venial sins; yet they are constantly being committed with very little compunction, and practically no reflection on their sinfulness. They have their list of things that are downright wicked: flagrant things like brutal violence or cruelty, bitter revenge, barefaced lying, stealing, fraud, drunkenness, impurity and the like, and their consciences would be quite alive to delinquencies like these; but short of this you find yourself in a little world of, I won't say *hardened* and *blinded* consciences, but at least of *unsensitive* and *obtuse* consciences—which comes to the same thing without implying the same reproach.

The fact is, these people have never been brought up to anything better. They have just caught up the main outlines of morality, and, let us suppose, live up

to their lights as far as they go, though they do not go very far. If their reflections ever rise to anything higher, they will recognise that their various defects are not precisely ideal, and certainly unlovely; and they may on that account check themselves or even feel a bit ashamed of themselves, viewing their defects rather as imperfections than as sins. But conscience, or the sense of guilt, will hardly come within the horizon of their mind.

This is an extreme picture of the lower conscience in its lowest grade; sound and healthy as far as it goes, but limited in its outlook to gross and obvious outrages of morality. It implies a low standard of bringing up in a low environment, and admits of many varieties of type according to the social status of the family, their standard of education, culture and breeding. Among the higher classes taste and refinement would keep down the more unseemly faults, but might give occasion to a crop of others more insidious, arising from the spirit of worldliness. It is a state of things which might prevail among Catholic or non-Catholic families alike.

ONE-SIDED INSTRUCTION.

Among Catholics of average, or even good bringing up, a serious limitation of conscience might easily arise from one-sided instruction. The family conscience has been fully imbued with the heinousness of mortal sin, and especially with the frightening fact that mortal sin incurs the punishment of hell. This puts such an emphatic dividing line between mortal and venial sin that venial sin seems to be a matter of very little importance; a notion which receives encouragement from the teaching that it is easily got rid of by an act of contrition, that it does not stand in the way of Holy Communion, and above all, that there is no need to mention

it in confession. This teaching is of course theologically sound; but unless balanced by another kind of instruction in another line it can, and is very likely to bring about a serious depreciation of conscience which, under cover of that glib and detestible formula: "Only a venial sin" leads to the psychological impression that it "does not matter" or that it "hardly counts;" so that it ends in not counting at all.

ADEQUATE INSTRUCTION.

The "other kind of instruction" I refer to is to impress on the mind a deep and clear conviction that *all* sin, however small, is still sin; that all sin is a transgression of the divine law, a contravention of the divine will, a source of displeasure to the Divine Majesty, incurring corresponding losses of favour and grace. Secondly, that venial sin in accumulation or as a habit has an insidiously lowering effect on conscience, on character, on the spiritual life, and easily opens the door to mortal sin. Therefore, thirdly, every earnest Christian ought to cherish and cultivate a detestation of *all* sin alike, whether mortal or venial; and his resolution never deliberately to commit the least venial sin ought to be just as firm and absolute as never to commit a mortal sin.

Fourthly, the motives for this total exclusion of all deliberate sin, whether mortal or venial, should be strongly emphasised. God not only has the right, but thoroughly deserves our highest and most perfect service. He has imposed on us as a real commandment the duty of loving him with our whole heart and soul and mind and strength; and even if he had not made this a matter of precept, common decency would require of us that we should do it of our own choice, on account of the benefits of existence which he has con-

ferred upon us. Gratitude, loyalty and devotion impel us to render to him the most perfect service which lies in our power ; and to say that we will carry out his will so far as disobedience would plunge us into hell, but anything beyond this does not matter because it is "only a venial sin," strikes one as betraying an altogether indecent and unworthy attitude of mind. Try as we may, there are sure to be incidental defects in our service ; lapses due to surprise, inadvertence, the sudden impulse of passion ; which have just enough of consent in them to make them sins, yet fall short of full deliberation. But when it comes to a full realisation of what we are doing, and the wrongness of it, however small, and the power to say No to the suggestion or the impulse, our habitual attitude of mind, fixed, absolute and ready, must always be "No truck with the enemy ! No disloyalty to the flag ! Nothing to do with sin—even though it be *only* a venial sin."

There is nothing ideal in this, nothing elevated, nothing heroic, nothing sublime, nothing to be proud of or plume ourselves on. It is just our plain duty and a commonplace of our religion. It is the bare carrying out of the minimal essentials of the first and greatest of the commandments ; and when we have done all that is commanded us, we are still unprofitable servants !

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XIX. CONSCIENCE AND SIN.

THERE is one point about which I wish you to be quite clear as to my distinction between the higher and the lower conscience. You might imagine from what I said yesterday that the lower conscience meant a conscience which is only alive to mortal sin, while the higher conscience is also alive to venial sin. If so, I wish to remove such an impression altogether.

According to my idea every true and healthy conscience must be alive to all sin; and if the lower conscience fails to be alive to venial sin, it is not a healthy conscience but an unhealthy one—either an obtuse, or blunt, or partially hardened and blinded conscience. The higher conscience takes for its starting point the clear condemnation of all deliberate sin, whether mortal or venial. It passes on further only because of its keener perception of the more hidden sinfulness of what is called semi-deliberate sin, which the lower conscience might hardly notice; and by getting still deeper down to the roots and sources of sin in the dispositions of soul and attitudes of mind, even where these are not wilfully encouraged or complacently tolerated.

ATTITUDE OF THE WELL-DISPOSED.

However important the distinction between mortal and venial sin may seem to the eyes of the theologian, and however useful and even necessary it may be for the confessor to have in reserve, it is a distinction which the well-disposed and earnest Christian is not likely to care much about, for the simple reason that his mind is not merely bent on avoiding mortal sin, but on avoiding *all* sin.

The general attitude of the simple good unsophisticated

faithful, as far as my experience goes (said Herr Schneebels) is that they are quite fully imbued with the idea that all sin is bad, and all ought to be confessed with reasonable care, as far as it obtrudes itself on consciousness at the time. They don't try or wish to discriminate; they are sorry for it all, and wish to confess it all. So far as they think of a distinction between mortal and venial sin, they rather tend to look on all *deliberate* wickedness as mortal, and confess it as if it were mortal, at least for safety's sake. Nor does the exaggeration do them any harm, just because they want to confess it all, and are sorry for it all, and do not feel the least disposition to leave anything out. They will even confess missing Mass or not fasting when they know full well they were excused. They will confess it as if it were a sin; and yet if the confessor questions them, he will find out that they are quite clear on the point; but they "like to mention it," apparently as an acknowledgment of the law, and a reminder of it, and a safeguard against dangers of getting lax. All this from the psychological standpoint is sound, healthy and desirable, and a thing which we ought not to disturb by pertinacious harpings on the distinction between mortal and venial sin. For this easily carries with it the impression that venial sin does not matter much, and is likely to do no end of harm in spoiling the moral sense of the people. It may cause them to relax their vigilance against smaller faults, and to lose sight of that most vital concept of the Christian life; namely, that all deliberate sin, however small, is deplorably bad, an unmitigated evil, and a specific falling away from the standard of the Christian life.

THE PERPLEXED CONSCIENCE.

Let us post ourselves up as much as we like on the distinction between mortal and venial sin; but except

for the necessary minimal mention of it in its proper place in the catechism, let us keep it to ourselves until we come across occasions where we see that the distinction is necessary and profitable.

There are two ways in which the distinction is useful and necessary even for the best disposed and generous-souled Christians. The first is in order to dispel exaggerated ideas about one's own sinfulness which are apt to be depressing and discouraging : the dreadful idea that one is committing mortal sin when it is not really mortal sin, but venial sin due more to weakness than malice.

You will see at once what I mean if I recall a little book-work to your minds. Mortal sin is sin in its full essence ; and it is by studying mortal sin first that we get a clear idea of what sin really is. All other sin, which falls short of mortal sin, is called venial sin merely by default—by a lack of some of the properties which make up the full notion of sin.

It is through differences in the nature of the default that venial sins are divisible into three classes :—

(1) Of the first class are those sins which are venial *ex genere suo :* Vanity, boasting, exaggeration, telling "harmless" fibs, vain curiosity, envy or jealousy of the slighter sort, petty insincerities and deceptions ; whatever springs more from light-headedness, or weakness of character and frivolity than from malice.

(2) Of the second class are those smaller transgressions *ex parvitate materiae*, which would be mortal sins if they were greater ; for instance small offences against charity which do not seriously hurt one's neighbour's feelings, or small pilferings which do not seriously damage one's neighbour's pocket.

These two kinds of venial sins would still be venial in their nature even if done deliberately (unless with a

very special malice); and as the well-disposed Christian I am talking about is supposed never to entertain the idea of committing *any* fully deliberate venial sin, such sins do not present any puzzle to the mind.

(3) The difficulty arises where the sin is venial *ex defectu scientiae aut consensus*; where the act would be, (or might be) a mortal sin if done with full knowledge and consent, and falls short of a mortal sin only through a lack of these qualities in mind and will.

What happens is this. The well-disposed Christian, whom we are contemplating, does actually find himself falling into sin from time to time, with an accompanying consciousness that in a certain sense he "could not help it." He finds himself in the sin before he realises it, so to speak; and the only thing he can do is to try to get out of it as soon as possible. It may sometimes be quite a serious sin; something altogether wicked, which he feels sure is a mortal sin, and would hasten to confess as such, and would feel a keen dread of going to hell if he should die before absolution. At the same time he is quite sure that the sin was not deliberate—it was not done with any calm calculating choice or any downright malice. Hence his mind is in a state of perplexity, as if one could be trapped into mortal sin in spite of oneself—a situation calculated to breed anxiety and scruples. On this account it is of importance to explain the psychology of "semi-deliberation," as it is called; not only in order to relieve the mind, but also in order to point out the right lines of self-management while in that state. To deal with oneself when tempted to a deliberate act of sin is fairly easy, as it is simply a question of yes or no. To deal with oneself when in a state of half-yielding, half-resisting is quite a complicated matter—especially where the conflict is an interior

one not yet emerging into external action.

THE SUBJECTIVE ASPECT OF SIN.

In order to provide help to souls who are liable to this sort of perplexity, one must in the first place realise the narrowness of the material view of sin; measuring sin by the thing done, without taking into account the mentality with which it is done. In book-work the material view is the whole thing; in life the mentality is the whole thing.

THE ELEMENT OF MOTIVE.

I remember being told how a professor of great repute brought this point home to his students. They were discussing the duty of a priest to say all the words of the Mass, and the sinfulness of omitting any portion; and the lecture degenerated into a discussion among the authors as to whether it was the omission of five, six or seven words which would constitute "grave matter" and therefore a mortal sin. The professor got through the tedious task and then remarked: "It reminds one of the controversy as to how many stones form a heap—only worse. It is surely not the material quantity, but the intention or the excuse, that determines the guilt of the omission—whether it be from distraction, or laziness, or impatience, or contempt for the restraint of the law. In other words, the malice of the will determines the sin, no matter whether the passage skipped be long or short. You could get a mortal sin out of the omission of a single word if done out of malicious defiance of the law; and hardly a sin at all if it came from a wave of nervous irritability scarcely under control, no matter whether it were a sentence or a paragraph. Does it not therefore seem silly (concluded the professor) to contemplate the idea that five words omitted would

only send you to purgatory, while seven would send you to hell?"

THE PERSONAL EQUATION.

A similar missing of the mark can arise when laying down the law about forbidden reading. You can say objectively that books which depict sensuous or immoral matter calculated to provoke temptation are forbidden by reason of the danger. But who is to judge of the books themselves, so as to draw up a list of what is allowed or disallowed? One practical rule is safe: Don't take up any book which on the testimony of others: is notoriously bad. But this does not carry one very far. The mischief is generally in the books which are not notoriously bad. The only really helpful guidance one can give to a penitent is this:—Read simply and in good faith till you notice something—that the book is affecting your mind or feelings in a direction which you realise to be wrong. The distinction between mind and feelings (continued Herr Schneebels) is of the greatest importance. The old-fashioned novel would sometimes appeal to the imagination and stir the feelings in a momentary way over a particular incident; but the stir would pass away at once unless wilfully cherished, and no harm would be done. It merely depicted a lapse of human nature as an element in the story, but left it as a lapse, recognised and acknowledged as such. Among modern novels there is another more subtle and far-reaching danger. They are the product of modern minds imbued with naturalistic sex-conceptions; and what happens in them is not lapses from the old recognised moral standards, but the consistent carrying out of the new morality which makes natural instinct a supreme law, to be obeyed as a law, and not yielded to as a temptation. These are the dangerous

books, for they open out a new line of thought ; portray a new set of principles which run altogether counter to traditional principles of morality, and give a consistent philosophical basis to licence and sin ; ridding it, in fact, of its character as sin. The reader may not be convinced, of course ; he may still adhere to his established views and principles ; but his grip on those views and principles will be weakened, and the principles themselves will seem to be undermined. This then is the guiding advice which is calculated to be helpful :—If a book stirs your imagination and feelings merely in an incidental way, you can pass the incident over; but if it *continues* to have the same effect you should drop it. But as soon as you find a book familiarising you with ideas which are subversive of the accepted principles of morality, throw it down as you would throw down a cup of poison. To run conscious risks of getting your moral sense blunted is in itself a sin.

From this you will see how greatly the personal equation enters into questions of sin. When the material thing is the same, its effect on the individual will vary so much that what would be no sin in one person may be even a mortal sin in another.

THE ELEMENT OF MALICE.

I can illustrate it another way (said Herr Schneebels). Suppose it happens to be the habit of my life to be kindly, benevolent, charitable, considerate, full of the spirit of service, merciful and self-sacrificing in trying to make everybody happy, and never saying or doing any unkind thing to anybody under any provocation whatever. [I don't mean to put myself on a pedestal, but merely use the first person singular for convenience]. On a certain occasion however I do feel a very strong temptation to say or do something nasty, because im-

mensely provoked. Being alert in mind and self-possessed, the giving way to that temptation would be quite deliberate if I *did* give way. But the act would be such a departure from my regular virtuous habit, such a right-about-face, and turning my back on my established principles, that I could not perform the nasty action without a very serious amount of malice; a malice so unmitigated that I should certainly regard it as a mortal sin against charity both in relation to my neighbour and to God. I should certainly feel bound to confess it as such, without weighing the objective action in the scales of casuistry as to whether the nasty thing done would amount to a *gravis contristatio* of my neighbour or not. The subjective malice would to my mind determine the intrinsic nature of the sin, as a grave departure from the virtue of charity.

But let us suppose some other man in whom the virtue of charity was not strong—but was just sufficient to satisfy the minimum demands of the divine law. Such a man might easily and often fall into faults against charity, and say or do nasty things, with sufficient deliberateness and sufficient malice to be sinful; but just because his virtue of charity was not a strong and regular habit, such actions would be almost "natural" to him, and would rather count to him as incidental slips and lapses from a mediocre norm, than any very serious sin—defects, faults, perhaps hardly sins, or at least—detestible phrase—*only* venial sins. And moral theologians, judging solely by the objective nature of the act, would certainly support this verdict.

THE SUBJECTIVE NORM.

Now my contention is not to question the soundness of the verdict "only a venial sin" in case No. 2, but to uphold side by side with it the soundness of the verdict

"mortal sin" in case No. 1. For the *guilt* of sin, precisely in itself, is not an objective but a subjective thing, and is measured by the amount of malice which is put into the act. In this way it is, I believe, common doctrine that what is *objectively* a mortal sin can be *subjectively* a venial sin by reason of the small amount of malice with which it is performed—*e.g.* on account of the impulse of passion, incomplete deliberation or advertence, etc. So I would contend that what is objectively only a venial sin can be subjectively a mortal sin by reason of the large amount of malice with which it is performed. Moreover, the measure of the malice attached to the act is, or can be, determined by the habitual state of the man who commits it, and the violence done to the habit of virtue with which he is imbued. In the given instance, the uncharitable action contemplated could be done in case No. 2 with very little malice, just because there exists in the soul no strong habit of charity to be violently outraged; while in case No. 1 it could only be done with very great malice, just because of the violent outrage of a strong habit of charity which would be involved.

SAINTS AS GREAT SINNERS.

This is an illustration of another aspect of the higher conscience not hitherto touched upon. We occasionally read of great saints calling themselves great sinners; and generally we regard this merely as an expression of their great humility rather than an expression of the truth. In short, we implicitly accuse them of exaggeration due to a sort of pious extravagance—edifying of course, but not to be taken in any other light.

I believe myself that this analysis is altogether unsound. We must remember that true humility involves a true estimate of self, and we should hesitate to accuse

the saints of exaggeration. From the point of view of the higher conscience I believe that what the saints said of themselves was true. They had a clear insight into what perfect virtue meant, and realised (as St. Thomas teaches) that every deviation from a virtue is a vice, or in the specific act a sin. They had a keen eye to perceive in themselves every minute deviation from virtue, and truly recognised it as sin. They had a keen perception of the heinousness of *all* sin; even the smallest seemed, and really was, great to them. The notion of mortal sin of course never entered into their minds; and you would never hear a saint talking of "*only*" a venial sin. That it was sin at all, even in the most demi-semi-deliberate form, was quite enough to constitute them sinners; and because the sinfulness of any sin was great, they came to the conclusion that they were *great* sinners; and in this conclusion, measured by their intensely clear, spiritual vision, they were right. They had the higher conscience in an eminent degree; and that explains it all.

HUMILITY AND SIN.

Somehow or other, what I have just said (continued Herr Schneebels) recalls to my mind a curious passage in the exercises of St. Ignatius which deals with the three degrees of humility; a passage which for many years I considered positively queer. I was used to the idea that humility meant a low opinion of oneself, as contrasted with pride which means a high opinion of oneself—with the scholion that the high opinion of oneself was a false opinion while the low opinion of oneself was a true opinion—thus eliminating any *undue* estimate of one's lowliness, which would be false humility. St. Ignatius, to one's great surprise, leaves all this aside, and makes humility consist in abstention

from sin ; the first degree, abstention from mortal sin, and the second degree, abstention from deliberate venial sin. You would logically expect the third degree to be abstention from all sin, even demi-semi-deliberate sin, so as to be perfectly sinless ; but instead of that the third degree suddenly takes another direction—the love of poverty, abjection and pain.

It is not difficult on reflection to explain the first two degrees, if we assume that pride is the root of all sin—pride being not so much a high opinion of ourselves, as an assumption of absolute autonomy and independence of God, leading us to do just what we like regardless of his laws. Humility, on the other hand, is not merely a low estimate of ourselves, but a recognition of our dependence on God and our subjection to his laws. Hence quite logically the first degree of humility is to obey his law in great things binding under mortal sin, and the second is to obey his law even in lesser things, so that we never *deliberately* break his law at all.

THE THIRD DEGREE.

In this way the first and second degrees of humility are clearly explained ; but what about the third ? One explanation first occurred to me thus :—No one indulges in sin except so far as he likes it—so far as he feels pleasure in it. Hence the first two degrees of humility consist in depriving ourselves of the pleasures of sin. Now when a man has got so far as to deny himself all pleasure, the only further degree possible is willingly to embrace pain which is the opposite of pleasure ; and so the third degree issues in the love of suffering.

That is one explanation. Another is this. In the beginning of the exercises we are taught straight away that creatures are to be used so far as they help, and dis-

carded so far as they impede the end for which we were created. Hence we must cultivate indifference to health or sickness, wealth or poverty, and the rest; making ourselves superior to likes or dislikes, and resigning ourselves to divine providence, and taking what it sends us, and making use of that as the proper means to our end. Perhaps St. Ignatius was harking back to this idea when he made the third degree of humility consist in a positive love and preference for suffering. As riches and honours and pleasures are the means by which men are led into sin, so poverty and abjection and pain are the means by which men are led away from sin (cf. the two standards). The one group constitutes a danger; the other, by reaction on the opposite side, constitutes a safeguard. Hence, although we must still maintain in principle the spirit of indifference, by accepting from divine providence either the one or the other; still our desire to avoid pride and to attain humility makes us wish for the safer course; poverty rather than riches, abjection rather than honours, pain rather than pleasure. In this way we are removed further from the likelihood of sin; and so the third degree of humility becomes a safeguard for the first and the second, and the seal of our salvation.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XX. MORTAL AND VENIAL SIN.

But in tackling this question (continued Herr Schneebels) we must proceed in an orderly way from the simple to the complex. Hence we must begin with the radical notion of sin, which is only verified in its fulness in mortal sin.

Sin in general is defined as a voluntary transgression of the divine law; and a mortal sin as a *grave* or *serious* transgression. But this does not help us to clearness; for "grave and serious" convey the idea of degree rather than kind. The idea that mortal sin means *contra legem* while venial sin means *præter legem*, expresses difference in kind but leaves us rather in the vague. The saying that mortal sin means "*turning our back* on God, while venial sin means only *turning aside*," although only a metaphor, sets us on the right lines of thinking; it suggests the thought that mortal sin is an aversion of the will so complete as to be altogether incompatible with the love of God, while venial sin is rather a distraction or diversion of the will not altogether incompatible with the love of God, but spoiling its concentration and integrity. More helpful still is the idea that mortal sin is a preference of a creature to God so complete as to make us give up God altogether at the moment; while venial sin means that without giving up God altogether we share our love improperly between him and a creature, thus destroying its whole-heartedness, but not its substance.

These notions, however helpful, do not carry us the whole way, and every one of them is open to critical difficulties. I do not think we can ever get the point

clear (continued Herr Schneebels) till we go down to the root of sin, which is in the will; and instead of looking at sin ontologically we look at it psychologically. From the psychological point of view sin is not to be defined as a transgression of law, but as a breach of love.

THE MEANING OF LOVE.

Love is a simple essence which cannot be analysed, except that it is a *nisus* of the will responding to the attraction of an object, and making towards its possession by such union as is possible. In the physical order it is represented by the attraction of atom for atom, and in the animal order by the mating instinct. In the rational order it may be accompanied by sensitive and physical attraction, but essentially it consists in a quest for union of fellowship in mind and will leading to a harmonic life; seeking jointly the same ends, and finding union of soul thereby. Practically this union consists in an interchange; each trying to please the other, each trying to serve the other, each sharing with the other all the goods of life mental, moral and material; with the result that each tries to promote the well-being of the other and finds the highest joy in doing so. Each too shares the burdens and pains of the other actually or by sympathy, so that the poet can ascribe the pleasure of friendship to this, that it divides the burden of life into two parts "giving half to him."

Hence the important distinction in philosophy between affective love and effective love. Affective love is a matter of feeling, sentiment or desire; a mere attitude of static delight in the contemplation, and endearment as expressive of that delight, but not otherwise resolving itself into action; while effective love is an executive or dynamic thing which issues in action towards the beloved, in the way of service. Hence

the penetrating philosophy of St. Ignatius, which rids us of all delusions as to the reality of our love. "Love (he says) is shown more in deeds than in words," and in deeds it shows itself by sharing with the beloved every good thing that the lover possesses and can impart; which love becomes heroic as soon as the sharing means self-sacrifice or deprivation for sake of the beloved.

CO-ORDINATE AND SUBORDINATE LOVE.

This is the meaning of love subsisting as a voluntary bond between equals, where the relations are co-ordinate and reciprocal. As soon as it is a question of love between unequals, other qualities enter into the case. For instance between parent and offspring, or master and servant, or teacher and pupil, the relation is a subordinate one on the part of the inferior, and carries with it certain duties such as respect, reverence, submission and obedience. In such a situation the distinction between affective and effective love acquires a new significance. Sentiments of tenderness or of benevolence are bound up with the principle of duty, and lose their reality and sincerity unless they issue in the fulfilment of duty. "If you love me, keep my commandments. If you do not keep my commandments your love is emptied of its meaning and counts as cancelled; and the cancelling of your love means the forfeiture of mine."

It is in the nature of the case that the superior should have the advantage of his higher position. It is for him to determine whether to give love or withhold it, whether to accept love or decline it; to fix the terms on which the relationship of love shall be maintained, and the conditions under which it shall be suspended or cancelled. The balance of the benefit, again, is on the side of the inferior; for he is dependent on the superior

for the relation of love, and receives it as a favour, and responds to it with gratitude. Hence if ever a breach should occur through the fault of the inferior, it is clear that reconciliation and restoration cannot be achieved merely by repentance and a desire for recovery by the delinquent inferior, but depends entirely on the acceptance of that repentance and a free act of forgiveness on the part of the superior. In love "one is enough to start a quarrel, but two are needed to make it up."

THE BREACH OF LOVE.

Between two equals love can be diminished by coldness or negligence ; and if the coldness and negligence become complete, love is altogether lost. A complete rupture can be brought about quite suddenly by a clash of wills and a fixed and hostile opposition. Between a superior and an inferior the same partial or total estrangement can be brought about by the same means, beginning from the lower party. If the superior is in a position to command the inferior, and stands as a lawgiver to him, love will be diminished by a lax, careless, or incomplete observance of the laws laid down, and will break down altogether either by a single flagrant act of disobedience amounting to rebellion, or by a succession of smaller disobediences accumulating into a chronic state of things and fixing itself as a permanent habit of mind and conduct. [The first means the single specific act of mortal sin, the second the coalescence of many venial sins into a *state* of mortal sin].

For such a rupture it is not necessary that the inferior should, as a matter of sentiment or feeling, lose his (affective) love, respect or reverence for the superior, or desire to break with him or become hostile to him. It is enough if he behaves in a way which is inconsistent with such feelings and sentiments, by flout-

ing authority, outraging law, and persuing his own will in directions contrary to the will of the superior. [Affective love is not sufficient without effective love, and is deprived of its reality by conduct inconsistent with it and contradictory to it]. The superior may tolerate with pain and regret the falling off of the inferior from the standards of true love, and obedience bound up with love. He is ready to overlook a good deal, and make allowances for the weaknesses and limitations of human nature. But there is a certain point where it would be inconsistent alike with self-respect and decency and the right order of things to let it go on with impunity. At that point comes a clash, a dismissal and a complete alienation. Out of the house he goes, and the rupture and separation is complete.

That, portrayed graphically, is what is achieved by mortal sin; and anything is mortal sin which actually brings about this result. It is not precisely the thing done which counts; for a servant might do something tremendously wrong without knowing it; in which case an explanation and an apology for the mistake and an attempt to put things right would suffice. It is the deliberate outrage of the law, fully knowing the law, and fully conscious of the obligation to obey it, that constitutes the fatal crime: "I know what I ought to do. I know I can do it; and yet I will not do it, despite the fact that I shall outrage the rights of my superior and forfeit his love."

IN WHAT THE BREACH CONSISTS.

It is important to realise that mortal sin does not require a positive, direct and formal act of repudiating the love of God, or excluding or eliminating it; still less does it require positively setting the will against God, and hating Him instead of loving Him. All that is required is that

the will gives itself over to some object which God has forbidden, or consciously fails to exert itself against a sinful impulse when God's commandment demands such an exertion, and allows that impulse to work itself out in a sinful direction; or again, fails to will and do something which God has commanded to be done. Mortal sin, in short, includes any failure in duty to conscience, when the duty is clearly known and realised, and the power of fulfilling it is also clearly known and realised. The sinner may not have the least wish to cease loving God, still less to hate him; he may in fact distinctly wish not to be alienated from God, or become his enemy or an object of hatred to him. It is only the attractiveness of the sinful object that draws him; and he would only be too glad if the object were not sinful, in order that he might enjoy it without harm. He knows however that the two are incompatible. By embracing the one, he must in the nature of the case lose the other. The decision of his will is simply this: "I must have this object, no matter whether it be sinful or not"; and it is this act of choice between two incompatibles, this responsible giving of the preference to the creature rather than to God, that introduces the complete discord between the will of man and the will of God which constitutes a mortal sin—mortal, because it is an absolute alienation, an absolute breach of relations. This alienation cannot be reversed by a mere reversal of the human will alone. A man who has thus once alienated himself from God has no claim for reconciliation on repentance. Only the free and merciful acceptance of that repentance on the other side can make good the breach. Thus *per se* a single sin which loses God, loses Him for ever; and that is why we call it mortal sin.

ANOTHER WAY.

Let us put it another way :—

Mortal sin involves a conscious assumption of independence of God, by an act of will contrary to his known laws, either in the way of commission or omission, knowing that such an act is a full and complete defiance of his authority by throwing off the yoke of obedience. Or quite concisely :—Mortal sin is an absolute assertion of my own will contrary to God's known will, in regard to some important act. This however does not mean that a man must formulate his attitude of rebellion in the shape of a mental proposition : "I will not serve ; I will not obey." No such reflex act of the mind is necessary to constitute a mortal sin. It is enough if I actually will or do the thing in question, knowing that it is absolutely forbidden by one who has an absolute right to forbid it.

VENIAL SIN.

Any failure in love or duty which falls short of producing this disastrous effect is sin, indeed, but by default it is called venial sin, or in common phrase "a pardonable defect." The pardonability can arise from various causes. The first is what is called "parvitas materiae" or the smallness of the wrong thing done. It is somewhat difficult to see, scientifically, why the smallness of the thing done should make a difference. In case of Adam it was only the matter of tasting an apple, and yet that very trifling and in itself innocent act "brought sin into the world and all our woe." There are other cases in the Bible of tremendous punishments attached to seemingly small delinquencies, which we can only explain by supposing that the circumstances were such as to make that small delinquency a very maliciously wicked act *in the will.*

When we consider the infinite majesty of God's will, and his absolute claims on our complete obedience, it seems difficult to understand why any fully deliberate transgression of the divine law should not be a mortal sin. In a purely spiritual nature like that of an angel it seems probable that every sin would be a mortal sin; partly on account of the clarity of the intellect and the simplicity of the will unmixed with sense complications, and partly because of the material of choice which excludes bodily sins, and only gives scope for purely spiritual sins. In human life however, the situation is quite different. God has put mankind into a peculiar position full of complexities, which makes it possible to stand in the right relation with him substantially, and yet get out of right relation with him accidentally, in accessory detail, so as to mar the perfection of our attitude but not destroy it. And as every deviation, however slight, from the straight line is sinful, the result is venial sin; in some respects differentiated from mortal sin as a lesser degree, but also in other respects differentiated from mortal sin in kind.

THE HUMAN COMPLEX.

The combination of the spiritual and the corporal in man is I think the sole reason why such a thing as venial sin is possible. From this combination comes the disturbing influence of the sense faculties; the obscuring of the intellect through the weakness of the phantasm, or the strength of the imagination, or the turbulence of the passions; the bias given to the will through the forces of impulse or feelings, passions, attractions and repulsions, pleasure and pain; the dynamic of instinctive action (motor reflex) due to habit or temperamental constitution. The result is an almost complete system of dynamic which works spontaneously and of itself, and tends

to issue in action before a man realises what he is doing; and when he becomes fully conscious of it the thing is either done, or in such progress that it requires a shaking of self together, and the immediate and strenuous exercise of a check, before the machinery of the sensitive life can be brought to a standstill. This stoppage, moreover, takes time. There is a distinct interval between the moment when a man realises "I must stop this," and the actual *nisus* of the will which stops it. A very large amount of sin committed in most people's lives is of this nature. They find themselves actually doing the wrong thing without deliberation, under the pure stress of impulse. They realise that it is wrong when the sin is half through; and the test question then is whether they do their level best to stop it, or less than their best. Doing their level best exonerates them from the guilt of sin altogether; doing less than their best means venial sin; not doing anything at all, but simply giving free way to the sinful impulse, makes it mortal sin if the duty of self-control is clearly realised, and purposely ignored; if the will contentedly allows the sinful action to go on, although fully conscious of the power to stop it, and needing nothing but a simple determination of the will to stop it.

IMPERFECTIONS IN THE MIND.

In case the thing done is a grievous sin objectively, it is reduced to venial only by some imperfection in the act by which it is done. If the mind thinks that it is not a sin, no sin (subjectively speaking) is committed. If the mind is aware that it is sinful in some degree, but not mortally sinful, the sin will be venial by reason of an erroneous conscience. If a man is not sure whether it is a mortal sin, and thinks sincerely that he is justified in taking the benefit of the doubt, here again the

actual guilt is measured by the estimate of the act. In these ways the sin is reduced to venial by partial ignorance, an imperfection in the intellect.

To the same head can be reduced such mental weaknesses as partial inadvertence, want of attention, want of clear perception, want of realisation, which throw a sort of fog over the knowledge which is really there and impede its full application.

To the same head can also be reduced the disturbances of the mental vision which arise from strong feeling or absorbing passion. If their result is that the man does not see clearly the import of what he is doing, this does not save him from sin, but it can at least reduce his sin to the range of the venial. The practical test of this kind of obscuration can be recognised when a man after the act is over "comes to himself" so to speak, and feels that he was "not himself" at the time, otherwise he would not have acted thus.

IMPERFECTIONS IN THE WILL.

The other cause which reduces a sin to the venial order is some imperfection in the act of the will. This imperfection may be due to the foregoing causes, which have deprived the mind of that clear perception of alternatives and of their meaning which is necessary for a really deliberate choice. Here we have a case of a mortal sin reduced to the venial order through imperfect consent due to lack of mental vision. There are other cases where the knowledge is clear and adequate, with full perception, attention, and realisation of the sinfulness of the act—and yet the act is done. But it is not done by the will alone. It is done chiefly by the dynamic of impulse, feeling, passion, and the spontaneous movement of the body or members under the driving force of passion. The most convenient example is that

of striking a man in wild, passionate, murderous anger, which rises suddenly like a mountain-torrent and rushes impetuously on its way carrying all before it. As a rule such outbreaks of passion do not merely drive the limbs to action, but drive both mind and will out of action, the animal instinct occupying the whole field. There will generally however remain sufficient perception in the mind to recognise sin, and sufficient power in the will to make at least some resistance to it. If the will rises to the occasion and does its level best to check the passion, conscience may be completely saved in spite of the ugly appearances. But just so far as the will fails to do its level best there will be sin. No try at all would mean mortal sin, while some try short of one's level best would mean venial sin. Here again we have a case of combined lack of clear knowledge and of full consent.

Cases do occur in which the mind remains quite clear; the knowledge is perfect, and yet the consent is only partial. But these seem to be rare, and difficult to explain except by morbid bodily conditions, as for instance the "compulsory impulses" of neurasthenia, which lie very near the border-land of insanity. Conversely, in connection with the same physical disorder, there are "compulsory ideas" which so obsess the mind as to make the will helpless. But these cases are abnormal and pathological, and do not enter into the scope of a rational philosophy. The same applies to a variety of things which can occur in sleep or semi-sleep, or in the partial delirium which often accompanies fever, when motor-reflex activities take place over which neither mind nor will can exercise control until a state of full wide-awake consciousness returns.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XXI. INTROSPECTION.

THE analysis of semi-deliberate sin which we were discussing yesterday (said Herr Schneebels) shows that we have to do a certain amount of looking inside ourselves in order first to know, and then to control our interior acts : for it is in the interior that the battle with temptation has to be fought out. And this brings us to the subject of introspection, which is in some respects the greatest bugbear of the spiritual life, and often enough the spoiling of it.

A MEDICAL ANALOGY.

We can start off by making use of the analogy of introspection as regards the ailments of the body. Doctors as a rule dislike self-consciousness and introspection in a patient, which they usually presume to be morbid, and likely to be mixed up with imagination and delusion. Still some self-consciousness and introspection is necessary and unavoidable, if a patient is to give any account of his symptoms, on which a doctor to a great extent depends. The reason why introspection becomes morbid and delusive is because the patient, through want of scientific knowledge, is unable to distinguish between experiences which arise from real physical disorder, and those which arise from apprehension and imagination playing on the nerves.

The nerves, responding to the impress of the mind, produce feelings which are real at the time, but only transient and psychical, and do not represent real physical disorders. Thus during an epidemic of plague a highly strung temperament may, through the mere apprehension of catching the disease, begin to feel ex-

tremely unwell, and even begin to experience the looked-for symptoms, through the sympathetic response of the nerves to the apprehensive picturing of them by the imagination. The depressed state to which the body is reduced by the strain on the nerves will predispose him to contract the disease ; whereas if he had cheerfully gone on without giving the matter a thought he would have passed through the danger in safety.

On the other hand a certain amount of self-consciousness and introspection is necessary, in order that when real symptoms arise, a man may be sufficiently alert to recognise them, and give an account of them, so as to take medical advice or apply remedies in good time before the disease has had time to fasten on him.

HEALTHY VS. UNHEALTHY INTROSPECTION.

The dividing line between healthy and unhealthy introspection can be specified thus :—

(1) Healthy introspection is objective. The symptom is felt first ; it thrusts itself on the attention. It is noticed, and calmly diagnosed as it presents itself. The symptom does not disappear when the mind is thrust away from it, but perseveres and obtrudes itself again on the notice every time the attention reverts to it.

(2) Unhealthy introspection is subjective. The apprehension or imagination comes first, and produces the symptom, and then proceeds to magnify it. Disturbed feelings act and re-act on each other and generate a sense of total disorder. This disorder however will disappear entirely as soon as the mind is diverted. If later on the mind reverts again to the subject, the symptom will not be found obtruding itself at once as permanently existing, but will begin to develop once more under the impress of a renewed apprehension.

(3) Healthy introspection can degenerate into unhealthy introspection by the apprehensions which follow from the recognition of an objective symptom. The soundness of the introspection can be maintained by recognising the transition, and clinging to the previous objective observations while repudiating the subjective developments which have supervened. The rise of subjective feelings cannot always be prevented, nor can they always be suppressed. A man can go through a paroxysm of terror imagining that he has the disease. But he can at the same time maintain in the background a clear mind realising that it is only "imagination," and so save himself from psychological demoralisation.

These considerations, drawn from the medical department, will help us considerably in the important work of diagnosing the conditions of the soul when confronted with temptation and involved in a complexity of feelings, dispositions, desires, which it is difficult to distinguish from volitions.

IMPORTANCE OF SOUND INTROSPECTION.

The matter is of importance for two reasons :—

First in order that a man may be able to judge himself as to whether he has given way to the temptation, and if so in what way and to what extent. But secondly (and this is of the greatest importance of all) in order that a man, finding himself in the turmoil of temptation, may recognise clearly the different forces which are arrayed against him, so as to be able to deal with each in the proper way, and thus defend himself from the attack and bring himself unscathed and innocent through the conflict. Valuable as it may be for a man to be able to know whether he *has* sinned, after the incident is over, it is immeasurably more valuable for a man to perceive, in the thick of the fight, precisely

when sin begins, in order to draw the line with precision and so maintain his spotlessness intact.

The object of this study is therefore not so much to enable a man to know when he has sinned in order that he may repent of it ; but to enable him to know when he *will* sin, in order that he may prevent it.

CONSENT.

A man will sin when he *consents* to something which he knows to be sinful, no matter whether that something be a thought or a feeling or a desire or a gratification or an anticipated action.

This consent is essentially an interior act of the rational will, and not merely an "experience." A man may experience feelings, desires, gratifications in the sensible order which simply emerge from the lower instincts. These he ought to suppress so far as they can be suppressed ; and the failure to *try* at least to suppress them may in certain cases practically prove consent. But in many cases they simply cannot be suppressed, and have to be put up with until they die out of themselves. Even in such cases the experience of these feelings, etc., is something altogether distinct from consenting to them. Consent means that the will entertains these feelings with complacency, welcomes them, is content and even glad that they are there, does not protest against them, does not wish them to be away, but acquiesces in them and enters into a willing enjoyment of them.

This is the first kind of consent, which is the static consent of *complacency*. It is possible that the will may be drawn into this state of complacency by the sheer attraction of the feelings, before the mind realises it. Even when the mind does realise it, it may take some moments of time before the mind goes on to realise that

the consent is sinful and ought to be suppressed. After this again it may take some moments of time before the mind realises its *power* to suppress the consent, and can focus down its vital energy on to the act of actually suppressing it. This suppression has to be achieved by a sharp shaking of oneself together, and a sudden and forcible exercise of free choice issuing in a complete reversal of the will's attitude; all of which is analagous to the sudden pulling up of a horse to a standstill, and then turning it round.

According to this analogy the horse represents the forces of the sensitive nature running their course according to instinct, while the rational will in the rider is endorsing the activity of the steed and entering into the zest of the gallop. The realisation "I ought to stop it" comes as the dictate of conscience imposing itself on the mind of the rider. It takes a moment or two before the mental realisation transmits itself to the will, and through the will to the hands holding the reins; then comes the pull up, and the standstill, and the turning round of the horse in obedience to the rein. The impulse of the horse to rush forward may still be there, and may, when checked, issue in wild gibbings and prancings, which the rider may not be able to control. But at any rate his will is firmly set against them, and he is doing his best to suppress them. In acting thus he is fulfilling his duty, and for what he cannot repress he is not responsible.

THE AVOIDANCE OF CONSENT.

The essential point of duty therefore to which conscience directs us is: (1) that we should never consciously give consent of the will to any thought, feeling or gratification which we may experience, and which we know is forbidden by the divine law. (2) That we should

positively suppress such thoughts, feelings, etc., so far as we are able to do so. (3) That if we cannot suppress them we should at least do our best to divert the mind from them. (4) That even where through inadvertence the will has already thrown itself into consent, we should, on the instant of realising this, sharply cancel the consent and replace it by an act of repudiation and protest. (5) If the thoughts, feelings, etc., persevere in spite of ourselves, we hold on to this repudiation and protest all the time till they subside of themselves.

A man who carries out this programme promptly and entirely escapes unscathed from the trial, and has exercised quite a large group of virtues into the bargain :—Prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and the specific virtue against which he was tempted ; besides faith, hope and charity so far as these motives lay in the background of his mind.

A man who has carried out this programme in substance, so as to have finally scored the victory but not quite promptly or entirely, has escaped mortal sin, but has incurred some taint of venial sin varying in kind and degree according to the elements of the failure.

COMPLACENCY AND EXECUTION.

A man who, realising fully the situation, and his duty of self-mastery, and his power to exercise self-mastery, has given consent, or endorsed or confirmed a consent already inadvertently in possession, has committed a mortal sin of "*complacency* in mortal sin," even though the sin has remained altogether an internal sin without issuing in any external or bodily action.

On the other hand, even if the sin has issued in external or bodily action, through the vehemence of the animal instincts acting spontaneously in a motor-reflex manner, the situation is not changed—provided this

activity has begun and continued before the rational mind has come to realise the situation in such a way as to be able to control it, and thus to become responsible for its continuance. As soon as this moment arrives it becomes a strict duty not only to cancel the complacency of the will, but also to control and suppress every kind of bodily activity by which the sinful action is being carried on. To allow the activity to continue under the fallacious plea that "now it has gone so far it cannot be stopped," and so "I might as well have my fling" means an effective consent of the will not merely of the complacent order but of the executive order; and to imagine that one will be saved from the guilt by allowing it to go on under interior protest, is pure sophistry and self-delusion. For as affective love is emptied of its significance unless accompanied by effective love, and is positively cancelled by any act inconsistent with love; so the interior protest of the will against sin actually going on is reduced to a mere pretence, if the will does not further exert itself to suppress the actual sin against which the protest is raised.

The fact that the effort to stop a process of sin, when it is far advanced, involves a serious effort painful to make, may *explain* why it is that in such circumstances a man fails to do his duty; but it does not *justify* his failure, nor exonerate him from the guilt of his failure.

The most lenient thing one can say under such circumstances is this: The greater the forces to be contended against, the more time it takes for the soul to gather strength so as to concentrate its full energies on the struggle. On account of this delay the exertion may be applied too late to prevent the completion of the sinful act. At the same time the fact that the soul is trying its practical best *all* the time, will exonerate

it from the guilt of mortal sin ; but there will still remain some guilt of venial sin in proportion as the soul has been slack or remiss, so as to fall short in any degree from its level best.

A DANGER OF SOPHISTICATION.

There is a certain danger in the otherwise perfectly sound doctrine, that what objectively is mortal sin can be reduced to venial sin by any lack of fulness in the consent of the will, and any lack of realisation on the part of the mind. The danger consists in this, that human nature is excessively prone to find excuses for its weakness and failings, and seizes upon anything which will make them less heinous, or diminish their guilt or lighten responsibility. A man who has absorbed the foregoing doctrine may therefore be tempted to take the most lenient view of his sins that is possible. On looking back on them after they have been committed he may be prone to argue : "Perhaps it was after all only a venial sin, and if so I need not confess it. I don't think I could really help it; I don't think I consented fully ; I didn't really wish to commit a mortal sin ; I really protested against it in my heart of hearts. It was practically over and done with before I quite knew where I was"— and so on. All these excuses may in a given case be true, and may involve an exoneration from mortal sin, and perhaps even an exoneration from all sin. But there is the danger of the same excuses being sophistical and only half sincere, the outcome of the wish which is father to the thought.

SELF-DECEPTION.

If such self-deluding meditations were to have the sole effect of causing a man pass over the mention of sins in confession, that result alone would be extremely undesirable. But the mischief once begun is likely to

go much further. Taking a lenient view of past sins is quite likely, nay sure to lead to taking the same lenient view of future sins: "If I can go so far in sin and yet escape the guilt of mortal sin *once*, I can do the same *twice*. If my last sin was probably only venial, my next sin will also probably be only venial; in fact probably all my sins are only venial." The result will be that next time a temptation arises, the mind, instead of being fortified by an intense realisation: "This is a mortal sin, and the slightest consent to it will involve me in the guilt of mortal sin; and therefore I must be absolutely prompt and firm—;" Instead of this, I say, the mind will probably be filled with half a dozen thoughts about imperfect realisation and imperfect consent, which will enable the sin to be perpetrated without making it a mortal sin. The result will be a general slackness of mind and will, and indisposition to make prompt and strenuous effort; nay, a secret wish to cherish inadvertence and slackness so as to let the sin slip through; a tardiness of action, also secretly cherished in the hope that the sin will complete itself before the effort is made. In this way the soul will get itself down to this state: "I don't want to commit a mortal sin; but I don't mind committing a venial sin in order to have the full enjoyment of what otherwise would be a mortal sin."

But the mischief does not end here. It is true that no amount of deliberateness in committing a venial sin will turn it into a mortal sin. But in the present case the man is deliberately helping himself to commit what he knows to be objectively a mortal sin, through wilfully cultivating states of slackness in mind and will which he hopes will save him from the guilt of the mortal sin. Such a hope is altogether delusive. If

those states of slackness were involuntary, they would save him just for that reason. But in the case we are considering those states are no longer involuntary, but are being wilfully and purposely cherished. Hence they do not save him from the guilt of mortal sin. On the contrary they put him in a sophistical state of mind by which he will begin habitually to give way to mortal sin under cover of the cloak of malice with which he has covered his conscience. Sooner or later he will be secretly congratulating himself on being able to indulge regularly in all the pleasures of mortal sin without *feeling* guilty of it, and therefore (so he will argue) without *being* guilty of it. His habitual frame of mind will be: "I do it, but I cannot help it. The thing is done without any consent." Yet all the time the consent is there. What has disappeared from his life is the resistance, not the power of resistance.

The remedy or preventative of this kind of self-deception (concluded Herr Schneebels) is extremely simple to state—though not always so simple to secure. It lies in the habitual and permanent possession of that fundamental quality of the soul which is called *sincere and whole-hearted good will*;—a quality possessed precisely as a habit, and therefore ready to issue in act as soon as any occasion presents itself.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XXII. GOOD-WILL.

I REMEMBER (said Herr Schneebels) listening to a retreat-instruction on self-deception which culminated in something that gave me a mental shock. After drawing a most alarming picture of the various delusions about self of which the soul was capable, the speaker passed on to the most subtle delusion of all, namely, the sense of one's own good desires and dispositions, and reached a climax by saying "Distrust even your consciousness of your own good-will." This, I said to myself, was really going too far. For if we are to distrust our own consciousness of our own good will, what on earth does there remain to trust to? It is nothing short of the gospel of despair.

TRANSIENT GOOD-WILL.

I have never forgotten that alarming utterance (said Herr Schneebels) and have pondered over it for many a long year. There is only one sense in which its soundness can be admitted. As a man can have a sense of security from danger in physical matters although the danger is really there, so a man might have a sense of good-will which, although truly experienced in a certain way, is something more fanciful than real. It may lie entirely on the surface; it may be only a matter of feeling, sentiment or emotion. It may be of a passing nature, neither springing from a permanent habit or attitude of mind already rooted in the soul, nor inaugurating a new attitude of mind which is to be lasting, and is to develop into a permanent habit or attitude of mind. It is once more the case of that transient affective love by which a man pronounces the act of charity sincerely meaning it at the time, but as an isolated act expressive of a passing

phase and not as representing a life, and therefore lacking in that the effective love which must also be there if the affective love is to have its proper value.

In this way it is quite possible for a man to mistake the value of his feelings, sentiments and aspirations of good will, and to make use of them as a sort of balance against realities of life and conduct which are quite inconsistent with a sterling attitude of good will.

Gradually therefore (continued Herr Schneebels I came to view that desperate dictum with some tolerance, to this extent, that even our consciousness of our own good-will ought to be submitted to certain tests, as soon as it is confronted with anything in our life which has even the least appearance of being inconsistent with it.

At the same time we have to take a broad, open daylight view of the situation, and not allow ourselves to sink into the turgid whirlpool of meticulous introspection, which means usually an entanglement in details, many of which are of their very nature obscure and elusive. As soon as a man sets himself to work trying to analyse the maze of thought, feelings, emotions, instincts, impulses, gratifications, consents, volitions which go to make up the complex of his inner life, he is quite as likely to find himself at the end in a deeper quagmire of delusions than he began with.

FALLING BACK ON PRINCIPLES.

Hence the line which a healthly workable guidance must take is to direct the mind to certain firm and clear principles which, being of themselves pillars of strength and rectitude, can be grasped and firmly held on to throughout the turmoil. These principles, which are fundamental and comprehensive enough to cover the whole moral ground, must be cultivated as so many attitudes of mind which, being habitual, will always be

on the spot, so to speak, in every emergency, and will serve as so many lighthouses to guide the mariner struggling in dangerous waters. Equipped with the proper charts and compass, and understanding the use of both, he will at least know at any moment where he is ; and if he does not succeed altogether in averting disaster, at least he will be competent to do his very best to avert it, and will be conscious of his desire to do his very best. If at any moment he finds himself doing something wrong he will not only realise his duty to put it right, but will also realise what must be done to put it right. Herein he will find the test of his own good will desirous to save the ship ; and when this is assured, he can with calm conscience acquit himself of blame for any disaster which may come upon him from forces entirely outside his own control. What materially happened is a thing which ought not to have happened ; but if he took every precaution and made every effort possible to prevent it from happening, no responsibility lies upon him.

Let us now apply the analogy. What are the best and most efficacious means by which to safeguard the most perfect moral integrity of our lives, in conformity to the ideals, standards and laws of right conduct already established and known ; especially in circumstances of test and trial when a whole army of hostile forces are in the field against us ? We are of course discussing the whole subject from a philosophical and not from a theological stand-point. We prescind therefore entirely from all questions of supernatural aid, and of relying on the means of securing supernatural aid by means of prayer and the sacraments. It is a maxim of theology. that grace presupposes nature and perfects it. Another maxim, a corollary of the foregoing, might profitably be

added; that we are therefore not supposed to rely on grace in such a way as to neglect nature, but rather to make the full use of every means which nature affords us, which we may leave to God to crown and perfect by supernatural elevations. *Facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*; "God helps those that help themselves," with the implication that unless we by our natural powers try to do our best according to our lights, we cannot expect God to crown our laziness with the rewards which he has only promised to our industry. Hence the wisdom and soundness of that aphorism of St. Ignatius: "Act as if everything depended on yourself, and pray as if everything depended on God."

CONCENTRATION ON HABITS.

After this parenthesis, intended to save trouble on the part of a certain class of heresy-scenting individuals —who seems to imagine that as soon as a Catholic writer or preacher says anything about natural virtues he is belittling the supernatural virtues, or as soon as he talks of our helping ourselves he means that we should consider ourselves independent of the help of God— After this parenthesis I say, (continued Herr Schneebels) we can come to our point once more, namely, that our strength in the spiritual and moral life does not lie in concentrating on isolated acts, but lies in concentrating on attitudes of mind solidified into habits. These dominate the will in such a way as to give it a spontaneous, one might say instinctive readiness to act on the spur of the moment in accordance with the attitude of the mind, promptly, integrally and with finality. They will, on the other hand, cause the will to abstain from action by the withholding of consent whenever this course of abstention is dictated by the same attitude of mind.

The establishment of a group of such habits, covering the whole range of the spiritual and moral life, is the nearest approach to making our integrity safe; and if failures do suddenly occur from time to time, this will be an altogether abnormal occurrence, arising from extraordinary circumstances not contemplated in the ordinary programme.

GENERIC HABITS.

The habits (or attitudes of mind) here referred to are of three sorts: the specific, the generic and the transcendental. Under the specific heading we include all the habits of the particular virtues. Justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance may be called the generic virtues, the rest being sub-divisions or closer specifications of these four: faith, hope, charity, truthfulness, honesty, chastity, obedience, each capable of further sub-divisions. In a general scheme of philosophy it would be irrelevant to go into details. But one thing must be said. Although the integral man should possess the habits of each and every detailed virtue taken singly, the task of acquiring each of them singly would involve a great deal more energy and concentration than most men are capable of. Fortunately this piecemeal concentration is not necessary; the specific is contained in the generic, and a generic grasp of virtue, once secured, naturally extends itself over the specific sub-divisions—just as the stem of a plant naturally extends itself into numerous branches as growth proceeds.

Thus a man whose whole soul is habitually bent on justice will not have to direct special efforts to the acquiring of the various particular forms of justice; the distributive; the commutative; justice towards God or one's neighbour; justice towards another's body or property or reputation. The general *firma voluntas tribuendi*

unicuique jus suum will instinctively apply itself to each case as soon as it is realised. The man who possesses the general habit of prudence will similarly apply the same prudence to every end and every means that lies before him. The man imbued with habitual temperance will display it with equal readiness in resisting every kind of pleasure which draws him off the right lines; and the man imbued with habitual fortitude will equally stand firm against any painful obstacle which would deter him from any duty.

TRANSCENDENTAL HABITS.

So much for the generic virtues; but of still more importance are what I call the transcendental virtues: the most comprehensive, because the most fundamental of all. As soon as I name them you will call them *vague*. But they are not vague; they are intensely definite, and only look vague because they are universal. Nay more, though I am going to enumerate several of them, they are really nothing but various facets of one and the same ultimate duality which belongs to the radical constitution of the soul: intellect devoted to truth, and will devoted to goodness. In ordinary language these properties of the soul are called *perfect reasonableness* and *perfect good-will*. Perfect reasonableness means an integral adhesion to truth and goodness, and repudiation of untruth and badness. Perfect good-will means a whole-hearted *love* of truth and goodness, and *hatred* of untruth and badness. But love and adhesion are the same thing, and hatred and repudiation are the same thing; and in this way the duality is reduced to unity.

The value of these general attitudes (which I call transcendental) is that the universal contains all particulars. A man who is thoroughly reasonable in consti-

tution, so to speak, will (except for incidental aberrations on the spur of the moment) be easily, naturally, instinctively reasonable in all his acts. A man imbued through and through with good-will, can hardly avoid displaying good-will on every occasion. The same if one expresses the transcendental quality in other ways: "To live up to one's lights"—"to do the right thing whatever it costs"—"to be true to conscience"—"to keep a spotless record"—"to be master of oneself"—"not to throw away any chance that offers itself of doing a good thing,"—"always to try and do one's duty"—"to do one's best every time, etc."*

PROVERBIAL MAXIMS.

One can easily bring these transcendental properties of reasonableness and good-will down to something more specific, pointing in the direction of various virtues: for instance "to recognise and accept the inevitable" as a help to calmness and patience. "The spirit of service or helpfulness, the spirit of cameraderie or fellowship" as helps to benevolence or charity. Quite a long list of proverbs could be collected together embodying more or less transcendental or generic virtues, such as: "Age quod agis"—"What is worth doing is worth doing well"—"Help a lame dog over a style"—"Sans peur et sans reproche"—"Give the devil his due"—"A stitch in time saves nine"—"The more haste the worse speed"—"The least said the soonest mended"—"No good crying over spilt milk" and hundreds of others. Everyone of them

* If you want to realise the moral efficacy of a pure and simple attitude of "good-will" you have only to recall the standard doctrine of baptism of desire. Theologians teach that even if a man has no desire at all for baptism, even if he does not believe in its value, even if he has never heard of it—still if his soul is in such a disposition of good-will that *he would* desire it if he knew about its value and importance, he is thereby qualified for "the baptism of desire" which is equivalent in its effects to actual baptism.

expresses some standard virtue in the form of a maxim, which, just because it takes hold of the memory, helps to form an attitude of mind, and induces a disposition to act according to it, and thus establishes a virtuous habit; and the efficacy of such proverbial maxims is chiefly due to their picturesque form—expressing a universal idea in a vivid and graphic way, such as appeals to human psychology. How much more stimulative is: "No good crying over spilt milk" than the dry philosophical maxim: "Resign yourself to the inevitable."

INTEGRITY OF IDEALS.

An ideal is made up of a cluster of the virtues. It should include all of them in a general sort of way, in the sense of not leaving any out. But there can be selective concentration: First on those which pertain to one's state of life, and which find scope for exercise in one's environment. Secondly on those which suit one's temperament, and can be better practised with success. Thirdly, stress must be laid on those in which one is likely by temperament to be deficient; for instance a weak character needs strengthening, a soft character needs hardening, an austere character needs softening, and so on. Lastly those must be emphasised which tend to counteract dangerous downward tendencies or "inordinate affections"—and this as a safeguard against degeneracy, or the gradual approximation to danger of sin.

An ideal can vary in grade of excellence; not only according to the actual dimensions of the programme, its comprehensiveness and completeness, but also according to its harmony of parts, and its suitability to the capacity of him who forms it; or in other words, its practical wisdom and consequent feasibility. But there is one point which I wish particularly to lay

stress upon. Whatever virtue may be in contemplation, the excellence of the ideal will depend upon the *integrity* of that virtue. There is something debilitating in a half-hearted effort; and so also there is something debilitating in a half-hearted ideal. Whatever virtue you entertain a predilection for, let it be thorough, whole-hearted, complete—or what I like to call "integral." Anything short of this is a compromise with the contrary vice. It leaves an indefinite edge round the virtue, a zone of hesitancy, a sort of shading off like a landscape in a mist. Your love of truth, for instance, must not be confined to the avoidance of lies and wilful deception. It must be an enthusiastic devotion, which shrinks from the slightest insincerity, and cultivates a transparent candour and straightforwardness not only in one's speech and action, but even in one's thoughts—so much so that even where secrecy or reserve is really necessary, the necessity is felt to be a regrettable one; and a peculiar joy is felt in having no secrets or reserves at all, so far as this is possible. The man who boasted that his every thought, word and action might be published in the columns of the *Times* was probably saying a great deal too much. But at any rate a man who could say this with truth would be an absolutely ideal man; and the right aspiration of every one who aims at ideals should be to try to approximate to this standard as nearly as he can, even though with all his efforts he may land far short of such a goal.

The same is to be said of every other virtue. To "Go the whole hog"* is half the secret of success. In the

* Herr Schneebels was very fond of this expression, which hit off so well his thoroughness. When one of the students asked him "Whether it was not rather a vulgar expression" he replied: "Well, I have been told that it is quite classical at Oxford; for instance the extreme ritualists used habitually to be described as "whole-hoggers."

fight against besetting vices, thoroughness is generally the only remedy, *e.g.*, total abstention from drink, from betting and gambling, etc. The passion for theatres, cinemas, novel reading can often be cured only by total "giving up." In case of the virtues there is a remarkable stimulus in thoroughness: To be wholly true, sincere and straightforward, instead of being true, sincere and straightforward to a certain extent. The half-hearted votary is always on the slope of the hill, with gravity to contend against. The "whole-hogger" stands jubilant on the summit, firm on his feet with no danger of sliding.

It is generally want of integrity or wholeness in an ideal which accounts for failures of achievement, and opens the way to a disintegration of the ideal itself, by a gradual loss of aspiration followed by a gradual lowering of the standard, till at length very little remains of either.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XXIII. SUDDEN TESTS.

One of the ways which will help us to self-knowledge is to observe our spontaneous response to sudden test-questions. In scores of ways such test questions present themselves without any need to seek them. We read or hear of something which has happened to some fellow-man; some situation in which he has been placed, calculated to test his character. We note his behaviour under the circumstances, which may strike us as appropriate or inappropriate, wise or foolish, noble or base, honourable or dishonourable, morally right or morally wrong. The question immediately suggests itself to the mind: What should I have done under the same circumstances?

REFLEX RESPONSES.

If such a question were formally raised by some one to whom we had to give an answer, we should pause and reflect, and calculate for a moment before giving the reply. We should think of our abstract ideals, standard and principles, the laws of morality, motives and interests, effects and consequences, what society would expect of us, what public opinion would say, what would be consistent with our reputation, credit and self-respect; and give our answer accordingly.

All this is the product of reflection, the outcome of weighing circumstances and motives, and taking account of interests and aims, and of ideals and aspirations. The result is deliberate, and may be a sincere expression of the character; but it may also be an outcome of extrinsic motives, as for instance a desire to say the thing which is expected, or the thing which will seem most creditable. Supposing it is a genuine decision,

it is still of interest to know the process gone through; how many inordinate dispositions of the soul had to be repressed, how many right motives and considerations had to be awakened and drawn to the surface, before that right decision was arrived at. It may not represent the habitual state of the soul, but a single isolated act in favour of doing the right thing; showing that the character is substantially sound when put to the test of a deliberate choice, but not revealing how much there lurks in the soul inconsistent with that right decision.

SPONTANEOUS RESPONSES.

The useful test therefore, to bring these secrets out, is the sudden test which gives no time for calculation. Something suggests to the imagination the picture of some chance to acquire great gains by an act of dishonesty or fraud; or some situation which would give a chance of sensual pleasure indulged in with impunity; or some opportunity of doing a serious bad turn to one whom we instinctively dislike. The soul instinctively responds to the imagined opportunity; but what is the response? A man might catch himself with his feelings and desires all going out towards the suggested object, and delighting in the contemplation of it.

It need not go on long; it need not involve any real consent. In a moment conscience might awaken and speak, and the impulse might be at once checked. But the self-revelation is there. A man has caught himself in a disposition which is inordinate, and even complacent towards the inordination. He realises thereby not only that there is something that needs watching in his dispositions, but also that there is something wrong in his attitude of mind. The wrongness may not be a positive one; not a real bent of the mind in the direction of the impulse. But at least negatively there is

something wanting; a lack of a firm, fixed, well-developed attitude of mind to the contrary; a weakness in the defences against the particular kind of temptation which is contemplated. It is a step in self-knowledge which suggests at once the importance of making good that which is lacking in the structure of the character, in order that when a similar imagination occurs again, the instinctive response of the soul will be an immediate revulsion from the sinful object which the imagination has presented.

ABSTRACT VS. CONCRETE TESTS.

Such sudden tests of imagination are not always a criterion of what would happen if the real object were to present itself in actual life. A man who would impulsively gloat over an imagined gratification might, when the real opportunity was presented to him, recoil from it instantaneously. In a moment of secret exasperation against a man who is doing me wrong I might find myself in a state of soul which would be expressible in the words "I would like to kill him." But if the next moment I found myself confronted with the man, with a chance of killing him with impunity, I should not feel even the impulse to do it, still less any real disposition of mind or will. Another person might be constituted just the other way: the imaginary situation would not move him, while the real opportunity would provoke a real temptation.

To put it in general terms: Some characters are strong against temptation in the abstract but weak in the concrete, that is, in the presence of the real opportunity; others are weak in the abstract and strong in the concrete. That is to say, the first would easily yield to sins of thought but resist sins of action, while the second would easily escape sins of thought but yield readily to

sins of action. It all depends on the place which imagination occupies in their psychological make-up. The unimaginative have chiefly to be on their guard outside, while the imaginative need to direct most of their vigilance inside. Stolid subjects, of low nerve-development, are not as a rule liable to sins of thought, or at least have little power of discriminating about their thoughts. It is the highly susceptible subject to whom thoughts are the special zone of danger. They are just the ones to whom introspection is necessary, and at the same time liable to become a nuisance, degenerating into scruples among the well-disposed, and into self-deception among the less well-disposed—in the way which we were discussing some time ago. These are the people to whom sudden tests will be of value, if they are used properly.

UNSOPHISTICATED CONSCIOUSNESS.

When there are no reflex motives at work, our deliverances of consciousness are simple, direct and sincere. We like this or dislike this, we want this and we don't want that; we make straight for what we like and what we want, and turn right away from what we dislike and what we don't want.

Between *willing* or *wishing*, and *doing*, there may occur some obstacle; either laziness from within, and shrinking from the necessary exertion, or difficulties and oppositions from outside. For these reasons we often abstain from carrying our wishes into effect; but we remain perfectly clear as to what our wishes are, which we would put into effect if the execution were easy, and will be ready to put into effect when we find it easy.

REFLEX CONSCIOUSNESS.

Upon this simple unsophisticated state of mind and will there can supervene something artificial and com-

plex, as soon as reflex motives come upon the scene. These motives arise generally from apprehending the consequences of our action which, being undesirable, are to be avoided if possible. These consequences can be divided into three general groups :—(1) Detriment to health, (2) Detriment to property or reputation, (3) Detriment to some other end or object which we may have at heart. Hence arises an antithesis between the simple spontaneous impulse of the will and a reflex motive suggesting the contrary course.

This situation can be met in three ways :—

(1) The simple spontaneous impulse prevails, and the thing is done regardless of all contrary motives.

(2) The reflex motive prevails. I must not do this because it is injurious to health, or it is not creditable, or it will spoil my plans, or whatever the case may be. The spontaneous impulse is suppressed and the whole idea repudiated and dismissed from the mind.

(3) The reflex motive prevails, the thing is given up ; but there still remains the liking of it, the inclination for it, and the wish that *I could* do it. The thought of it is cherished complacently, and the action abandoned with a kind of regret. This sort of thing can happen in everyday matters, such as paying a visit, taking an outing, buying a motor car, eating pastry or taking a peg—in which no moral issue is involved. In such cases the mind is usually quite clear as to what has gone on inside the soul ; the impulse, the motives, the deliberation, the attitude of the will throughout. The same clearness can occur in matters of moral import, *e.g.*, where it is a matter of doing something which on reflection the conscience condemns. Considerations of health, reputation, undesirable consequences may enter into the case as before ; but the vital

issue is with conscience: "The action is wrong (perhaps a mortal sin). Shall I follow the impulse, or shall I suppress it?

RESULTS OF DELIBERATION.

The result of the deliberation may be threefold as before:

(1) "I will do it, no matter what conscience says" (full and complete consent).

(2) "I will not do it. I suppress the impulse promptly and entirely. I fix my whole will against it, repudiating even the inclination to do it, and all complacency in the thought or feeling." If this is done promptly, it means full and complete dissent and freedom from all sin. If not done promptly, or not done perfectly, the case falls under No. 3:—

(3) I decide against the action, but only after some hesitation, as if making up my mind. The will is disposed to give consent, and would do so unless influenced by the opposite disposition to obey conscience. The will shows a substantially good attitude by turning to the dictate of conscience instead of away from it, thus helping itself towards the right decision. But the pull of the attraction is felt towards the sin; and there may be a certain amount of consent in the will, which welcomes the pleasure of the sinful thought or feeling, and is reluctant to part with it. In all this hesitation and dallying there is *some* sin, which escapes being mortal so far as there is no full and deliberate consent, no clear, fixed and definite choice.

WITHHOLDING CONSENT.

When once it is quite clear that no fully deliberate consent has been given, no self-abandonment to the sin even for a moment, and the incident has been closed

by a clear and final repudiation, there is no need for further self-analysis. In fact this had better be avoided. Unless the repudiation has been absolutely prompt and firm you may take for granted that there has been some degree of venial sin to be repented of. The only profit deriving from introspection would be to put one's finger on the exact kind of hesitation or dalliance which has taken place, in order to be more vigilant in just that point next time. If again there was a complexity of motives; if you were deterred not only by the voice of conscience but also by other motives, there is no need to weigh these different influences. Suffice it that in one way or other you managed to make the right issue with the temptation and to secure the substantial victory.

The great idea which every one should have in mind is this: "Make sure to *withhold consent*, whether to the thought, or the desire, or the feeling, or the gratification which is experienced, and which comes spontaneously and cannot (as an experience) be at once suppressed. Make straight for the goal of *repudiation*, and let it be prompt, hearty and complete as far as the attitude of mind and will is concerned. After that, the easiest and most effectual means whereby to suppress any experiences or inclinations which survive, is the use of distraction; that is, jump up and shake yourself together (physically and morally) and attend to something else.

PRAYER AND THE SACRAMENTS.

The great final question (continued Herr Schneebels) which ought to be the climax of every well-formulated system of moral philosophy, is: How to get ourselves into the state of mind and soul which will prepare us for carrying out this programme of resistance and repudiation, habitually and securely on every occasion when

temptation assails us. The ready answer on the mouth of every priest when confronted with such a question is usually: "Prayer and the Sacraments." He himself of course knows all the implications of this advice. But the untrained layman may not; and it is of great practical importance that these implications should not be overlooked. The implications are, that prayer and the sacraments are not the *whole* means but only *part* of the means. They are moreover indirect means, and auxiliary means—helps to the efficacy of other means which are direct.

What I am aiming at is this. The essential determinant of any moral issue (say in a temptation) is a pure and simple act of the natural free-will, made in conformity to the dictate of the natural conscience. I say natural, because although in a baptised person religious and moral acts are supernaturalised by grace, this does not in any way change the natural constitution of the faculties or their functionings. It leaves the whole natural psychology intact. A man permeated with grace and a man un-permeated with grace present themselves to perception exactly alike; and it is only by faith that we can assert any difference between them. Theology teaches that an act performed under grace lies under a supernatural dynamic which consists in a special illumination of the mind and a special inspiration of the will. But no one can say by self-inspection whether the illumination and inspiration are derived from this supernatural source, or whether they emerge out of the natural vitality of the faculties. Hence however important the doctrine of grace may be from a theological point of view, it falls outside the horizon of a psychological analysis, just because it does not make any *perceptible* difference to the mental processes.

It is therefore of great importance that the usual reference to "prayer and the sacraments" should not be understood in any sense which will obscure the plain, practical fact that prayer and the sacraments will not act as preventatives of sin in any automatic or mechanical way. No Catholic must be allowed to get the idea: "I have only to say my prayers and go to the sacraments, and everything will go right; there is nothing else that need be done." People who get into this way of thinking will begin to wonder why it is that they still continue to fall in spite of prayer and the sacraments. "Perhaps more prayer and more sacraments are needed?" No, it is something quite different that is needed, and that is *self-help*—something quite distinct from reliance on prayer and the sacraments—though of course not excluding or neglecting them.

The moral issue in a temptation is, as I have said before, a pure and simple act of will in conformity to conscience. Where that pure and simple act of will is lacking, no amount of prayer and sacraments can take its place. Prayer and the sacraments can suggest that act of will, can help you to it if you want to do it; but if you imagine that after prayer and the sacraments you can lie back and find your acts of will made for you, so to speak, you are under a grave mistake. The right issue can only come from the confluence of two forces—that of your own effort to do the right thing, and that of grace encouraging and facilitating and crowning that effort. It is a co-operative work on both sides. On the one hand we can say that the will co-operates with grace offered, but on the other hand we can equally say that grace co-operates with the will. Grace can give the first stimulus, but it cannot push the will into action; when

the will is in action, grace can second the action, but it cannot keep the action going unless the will itself also keeps going. Grace in short, although it precedes, accompanies and follows the activity of the human will, does not set the will going, nor keep it going. The action must proceed wholly from the man, just as it would if no grace entered into the question. Hence the admirable completeness of St. Ignatius' saying: "Act as if everything depended on yourself, and pray as if everything depended upon God."

This is why the formula "Prayer and the sacraments" is inadequate unless supplemented by the other formula "Effort or exertion." Prayer and the sacraments are not a substitute for the natural use of our faculties. The grace asked for by prayer is calculated to ease the burden of self-management, but not to throw the burden off our own shoulders on to God's. *Facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam.* God helps those that help themselves. But helping oneself means trying one's level best unaided, just as if no help was to be expected or counted on.

If it be apprehended that such teaching might lead to a reliance on one's own strength which might render the soul self-conceited or self-confident, so as to lose all sense of dependence on God, one can only reply that sound theology must not be concealed because forsooth an imperfect grasp of it may lead to mistaken notions. Our proper course on the contrary is to emphasise the sound theology, but make it adequate so as to ward off all error. Insistence on self-exertion, as if it were the whole thing, would of course be just as misleading as would be insistence on prayer and the sacraments as if they were the whole thing. What we have to do is to insist on both, each in its proper place. At present we are engag-

ed not in a theological but in a psychological exposition, and consequently we give all our attention to the question of self-management as a natural function, leaving insistence on prayer and the sacraments to the theological instructor expounding the doctrines of the faith.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PRAYER.

There is one way in which the question of prayer enters into psychology, namely as a factor in the process of self-management—first as the effect or manifestation of an actually existing state of soul, and secondly as a cause producing naturally an ulterior state of soul.

If a drowning man cries out for help, it is a certain sign that he desires to escape death. Similarly, if a man under temptation makes an ejaculatory prayer, this is an equally certain sign that he desires to escape sin. It is a clear proof that his attitude of mind is the right one, and the fundamental disposition of his will is the right one. But secondly, the ejaculation of prayer is in itself a form of resistance, and prepares the way of the will to the ultimate full resistance which overcomes the temptation. The cry of a drowning man: "God help me to swim" is a natural preamble to an actual effort to swim; and similarly the ejaculation "God help me to overcome this temptation" is a natural preamble to a sudden effort to overcome it.

Hence even if we had no assurance that God would give us any instantaneous help of grace in response to our prayer, the very act of praying is in the psychological order a help in two ways: first by putting into action the good dispositions already existing, and secondly by rousing the further resources of good dispositions lying beneath the surface. Prayer orientates our will in the

right direction, and thus disposes us for the grace which will help us along in that direction.

Nor need we try to calculate whether the help in question has come from grace in response to the prayer, or from the psychological effects of the act of praying. So long as the result is achieved, such distinctions do not matter in the least.

HERR SCHNEEBELS AGAIN.

PART XXIV. HABITS, CHARACTER AND DESTINY.

I AM not (said Herr Schneebels) an apostle of sublimated heroism or of rhapsodic fervour, but of simple rational integrity.

I am not an apostle of emotional pietism dependent on feeling or emotion. Feeling is a thing to be valued as a tincture, a source of warmth, a tone or a colour; not a thing to take motive from or take measure by.

I am not an apostle of introspectional analytic except where a complex case requires it.—A sound and healthy life, whether of soul or body, requires an outlook rather than an inlook.

I am an apostle of direct, intuitive realisation of conscience in its present utterance, and a disposition and attitude of mind to do the right thing, the best thing under the circumstances. According to this idea the programme of life is a very simple thing; one's

essential ideal is a very simple thing; virtue itself is a very simple thing, and the realisation of it is a very simple thing.

By this I do not mean to say that it is always an *easy* thing; for there may exist inside oneself and outside oneself opposing forces which require firm self-management to resist or overcome. Yet even in these states of crisis the issue is something quite simple, and the means of determining that issue are equally simple. Those means are reducible to three: (1) A general attitude of good-will, habitually bent on doing the right thing; (2) a general habit of alertness to make up your mind to do it as soon as you see what to do; (3) a general habit of thrusting aside any impulses, any motives, any suggestions which would draw you away from the right direction, or make you hesitate in the pursuit of what you realise to be right.

The programme admits of three degrees:—

(1) The first stage is that of the lower conscience; the *necessary* right thing, where failure means sin. And please do not draw any distinction between mortal and venial sin.

(2) The second stage is that of the higher conscience: *the appropriate and proper right thing*, by which you realise your wider and higher obligations; failing which you would fall short of the standards that your relations to God impose upon you, even though not under pain of specific sin.

(3) The third stage is that of aspiring after the *greatest and highest that is attainable*, apart from the idea of obligation in any sense of the word: "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

In carrying out this programme we must not be content with a series of isolated acts, each one the pro-

duct of an isolated choice and an isolated effort. We must go deeper down into the dispositions of the soul and attitudes of mind which constitute *habits* in the technical sense. When the right habits are once established, one can almost say that they look after themselves. It almost ceases to be a matter of effort, or a matter of choice, to act accordingly. The soul is so attuned to truth and goodness that it responds with a sympathetic vibration as soon as truth and goodness appear. The response becomes instinctive and spontaneous, a pure matter of course. Goodness has become second nature.

I am merely drawing a philosophical picture, (continued Herr Schneebels); I am not saying whether it is ever realised in life. My purpose is to convey an idea of the meaning of habit in its perfection; a fixed and permanent disposition to act in a certain way, easily, spontaneously, and without the least effort or hesitation. A man with a habit has not to begin laboriously all over again each time in order to achieve an act. The act flows out on the least provocation, nay on the slightest opportunity—just as electricity flows through a wire as soon as you touch the button. I want to bring out the immense advantage of habit, and how well worth acquiring even at great cost. You put in all the effort at the beginning, and soon the functional machine begins to work by itself; and once started it goes on working, acquiring fresh facility by each repeated act.

Acquire somehow an habitual attitude of appreciation of the right; an habitual readiness to do the right thing. Establish in yourself a general spirit of sincere and whole-hearted good-will, and you are in possession of the one transcendental, all-comprehensive habit of moral rectitude which makes your life ethically one continuous

consistent whole, stereotyped, one might almost say, in the right relation to God, your neighbour and yourself; which is the goal of the probation philosophy.

HABITS AND CHARACTER.

And so we are led back once more to the heart of our subject, which is the radical importance of habits in the moral and spiritual life.

There is an often quoted passage—from what author I forget or perhaps never knew—

> "Sow an act and reap a habit
> Sow a habit and reap a character
> Sow a character and reap a destiny"

which is the philosophy of life in a nutshell. Character is made up of habits. Good habits mean good character; bad habits mean bad character; strong habits mean strong character; weak habits mean weak character; no habits means no character. If character is defined as "life ruled by principles," habits can be defined as "principles rooted in the mind and dominating the will." If principles are defined as "ethical ideas applied to conduct," habits can be defined as "ethical ideas realised permanently in consciousness, and continually obeyed with a facility born of custom."

A man of no character is a man who has no habits; that is, he does not act consistently on principles, but acts sporadically according to impulses. All his acts are isolated acts, because they do not spring from any permanent moral judgment leading to a series of acts of the same kind; but spring from the forces of feeling, emotion, passion, or temperamental or physical disposition, to which the will abandons itself as they arise without any deliberate, moral calculation. If such a man behaves consistently, it is only because the impulse which

drives him is uniform and recurrent. Let the impulse change and the conduct will change accordingly; for there is lacking in him that self-possession, that self-mastery, that self-determination which is the very essence of character. Such people will be good if their impulses are good; bad if their impulses are bad; sometimes good and sometimes bad if their impulses vary. But whether good, or bad, or half and half, they are devoid of character so long as impulse and not principle is the determinant of their actions.

Principles may come to a man naturally by a sort of innate constitution, or they may be gradually and laboriously grasped by degrees. But no matter how they come, as soon as they are there they tend to dominate the will; and if the will yields obedience to their domination they issue in repeated acts, and out of repeated acts arises that facility and regularity in action which constitutes a habit.

CHARACTER DETERMINED BY HABITS.

It is therefore the presence of habits, and the kind of habits which are present, that determines what sort of a man I am at this moment. And the same habits will determine what I shall remain in the future, unless I realise the desirability of a change in my habits, and set about to achieve the change accordingly. If on the other hand I find myself a mere creature of impulse, there is really no telling what I may become in the future; because it is the characteristic feature of a man of impulse that you never know what he will be doing next. If however I have the grace to realise the unsatisfactoriness of my condition, and perceive the necessity of regulating myself in future by principles; then it really amounts to beginning life over again. It means starting a campaign of conquest over impulse,

in order to acquire that power of self-determination which is *the* one prerogative of a rational being, and which is secured only in one way. That way is the establishment in my mind of a set of principles covering the whole range of life and conduct, and reducing them so consistently to practice as to develop by repeated acts a full equipment of habits. And the most important of all habits is the habitual consciousness of those principles by which life is ruled.

And this equipment of habits of the right sort is called "the virtues." Negatively speaking, it must include all of them, so that I shall be normally in no danger of acting against any of them and thus falling into the vices; but positively speaking, it must include those virtues in particular which suit my state of life and enable me to fulfil its duties all round; those virtues which come in my way and offer opportunities to practice them, so that I shall not fail to rise to each occasion that presents itself, and shall thus never be found wanting, or fall short of what God might reasonably expect of me as part of his service.

THE CROWN OF PHILOSOPHY.

Therefore (concluded Herr Schneebels) it comes to this. The crown and epitome of any philosophy of life worthy of the name is all compressed in the one word "virtues," and virtues not viewed as acts, but as habits. For, as the distich says again, habits form character, and character determines destiny. Theology, it is true, makes destiny rest on the final fact of dying in a state of grace or out of it. But humanly speaking and according to the normal, the proverb is true: "As we live, so shall we die." The man of impulse may happen to be a good man or a bad man, or a mixture of both. He may happen to die under a good impulse or a

bad impulse ; and there is no arithmetic, no known rule of the resolution of forces, which will enable us to anticipate his end. But philosophically the man of principle, who has within him the natural determinants of his life, will have also within him the natural determinants of his death. And while always allowing for the versatility of the human spirit which can bring about the most unexpected changes, it can be taken as an altogether normal rule, and adopted as a necessary policy of prudence, that if a man wants to make his final destiny sure, his only course is to build up in himself *now* a structure of character out of the material of right principles, developed into habits by the twofold means of permanent attitudes of mind and consistently repeated acts. There must be nothing casual or haphazard about any part of the business.

A CAUTION ABOUT PHILOSOPHY.

Remember, however, (said Herr Schneebels impressively) that no philosophy of life will save your soul ; it will only damn you deeper if you know it and don't carry it out. For philosophy is merely organised knowledge in the intellect. So far as it is gasped it will point out your way like a finger-post ; so far as it is appreciated it will incline your will towards the right direction ; but only so far as it is accepted as a code of conscience and sedulously obeyed will it issue in the life which it proposes. St. Paul chastised his body and kept it under subjection, lest having preached to others, he himself should become a castaway ; and the same must it be with every man who possesses a philosophy of life, which must be translated into life, otherwise instead of being his justification it will be his condemnation.

In fact, there is a subtle danger in having a philosophy, namely, that the lofty thoughts and principles which

it contains may serve as a kind of cloak for its non-observance. Something of this sort seemed to have happened in case of the early *Encratites*, who developed a theory that if a man could sublimate himself into the higher plane of the *pneumatic* or spiritual mind, anything that happened in the *psychic* or *somatic* strata down below did not matter.

Apart from all theories, however, a philosophic habit of mind, if allowed to get out of touch with concrete reality, can become a source of delusion. A man can find such contemplative satisfaction in lofty ideals, as to ignore the fact that his real life is inconsistent with them. In this way the abstract can become a positive danger and a snare. For it can lead a man to estimate his own character according to his aspirations, and lose himself in a maze of idealistic velleities.

The only safeguard against this danger is always to apply the radical test: Habitual attitudes of mind and will issuing in acts.

[The End].

A SHORT SUMMARY.

I. THE APPARATUS OF LIFE.

The apparatus with which we are equipped for the conduct of life, consists in the following:—Our faculties or powers, our opportunities, and the vital energy which applies these powers to those opportunities.

(2) Dispositions of the soul responding to the attractions of various objects, and tending to issue in action in response to these attractions. [And the same with repulsions].

(3) Attitudes of mind in regard to the attractions or repulsions of various objects, controlling the dispositions just mentioned, either by way of approval and encouragement, or disapproval and discouragement, or even total repression.

(4) Habits of the soul which result from the permanency and consistency of the foregoing dispositions and habits of mind. These habits may be either connatal or acquired by deliberate efforts of self-management. In both cases they are strengthened by exercise in accordance with them, or weakened by non-exercise which tends to produce atrophy, or contrary exercise tending to their obliteration.

(5) Self-adjustment arising from a periodical survey of one's own condition under the two questions: (1) What sort of a man am I, in dispositions, attitudes of mind, habits and actions? (2) What sort of a man do I wish to become in the future; whether what I am only more so, or something different from what I am? Hence follows a confirmation of the existing programme of self-management, or else the formulation of a new programme, and an application of mind and will to execute it, in supersession to the old one.

II. THE PROGRAMME OF LIFE.

(1) Life is a probation to test what sort of a man I am now, and what I am going to make of myself in the future. But a probation or test implies a standard and criterion, declaring what I ought to be and what I ought to become.

(2) In the abstract, the standard and criterion lies in the recognition of the true and the good by the mind, and the pursuit of the true and the good by the free will. Ideally there should be the full attainment of the perfection of truth and goodness; but in practice the

attainment is conditioned by the limitations of human nature, and the handicaps under which it is placed in each individual man. Hence in practice the scope of our probation is reduced to this: Our aspiration towards truth and goodness as far as we perceive it, and our endeavour to attain it by efforts proportional to our capability and strength; actually going as far as we can, with a disposition to go further if our powers and opportunities would allow of it. Concisely put, this means living up to our lights, and doing our level best as far as our powers carry us.

(3) In the abstract, our ideal and exemplar is nothing short of the perfection of God as far as we can realise it. In the concrete it is as much of that ideal and exemplar as we can feasibly try for; always giving preference to those points of excellence which come practically before us, and have immediate bearing on our life; and the whole can be summed up in three phrases: (*a*) Personal goodness; (*b*) The duties of our state; (*c*) the chances which come in our way.

(4) The formation of our ideal is helped and made more definite by the aid of the Christian revelation, which reduces it to an exactly formulated code of laws: (*a*) To love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself; (*b*) To reduce this love from the affective to the effective condition by obeying all the specific laws, positive and negative, which are grouped under the comprehensive name of the commandments.

(5) This gives us the essential standard of our lives, the substance of our duty and the criterion of our conduct. Any radical failure to fulfil these duties is a radical failure to stand the test, while partial failures in the one are partial failures in the other.

(6) The foregoing standard receives an extension through the incarnation of Christ and his special teaching, which brings home to us the abstract ideal in a concrete form, and places before us our duty as Christians, to live up to the higher light thus conveyed to us. It does not, broadly speaking, increase the range of our obligation, which always is to do our best positively as well as negatively according to our lights. But it throws special emphasis on the positive side of our duty, which is not merely to avoid acting contrary to the supreme standard, but to throw ourselves actively into its fuller realisation. It is not enough to do all that is commanded under pain of sin and punishment, for in that case we are unprofitable servants. We must go further, and make the most of ourselves by the best use of our talents—so that our existence means not merely a preservation intact of the gifts bestowed upon us, but a development and growth in goodness, which is the only form of return we can make for those gifts. In other words, God expects us to be profitable servants whose existence brings about an addition to the truth and goodness which is in the universe, and thus positively realises and fulfils God's designs in creating us.

III. THE HIGHER CONSCIENCE.

(1) And this is what I call the higher conscience, as contrasted with the lower conscience. The lower conscience has for its object to enforce our duty of eschewing all moral evil, by abstention from every bad act; and if it enforces the duty of performing good acts it only does so because the failure to perform those acts would be a sin of omission and therefore equivalent to a bad act. The higher conscience, taking the dictates of the lower conscience for granted, passes on further: (*a*) From acts to habits, dispositions of the soul and atti-

tudes of mind ; (*b*) to deordinations in these dispositions and attitudes, which are sinful in tendency ; (*c*) to the roots and causes of sin, so as to anticipate the probabilities of sin, and as far as may be to eliminate all risks of sin, thus adopting the absolutely safe course ; (*d*) to the positive development of virtuous habits, which are the greatest safeguard against sin even in isolated acts, and involve exclusion of the contrary vicious habits.

(2) The higher conscience further declares what a man *ought* to do if he is to realise what God Almighty wants him to be. It conceives this "ought" as a duty and an obligation, even though no specific punishment is attached to failure, except the lack of that fulness of the moral life which it is God's desire that we should possess.

(3) The subject of the higher conscience does not admit of that definiteness of analysis which is so conspicuous a feature of the lower conscience (1) because the appeal is subjective, that is to the dictate of each man's own conscience determined by the degree of light he enjoys; and this can vary in every soul, and is not open to inspection, or to the judgment of any external tribunal; (2) because there is a certain indefiniteness round the virtues and vices, arising from the fact that virtue is the golden mean, and the vices a deviation from it either by excess or defect; (3) because of the complexity of circumstances which make the same act sometimes an act of virtue, and sometimes an excess, and sometimes a defect. [Instances: Lack of prudence, prudence, excess of prudence; cowardice, fortitude, rashness and so on].

(4) The practical distinction between the two is as follows: The lower conscience adheres to what is strictly and specifically obligatory under pain of sin, venial or

mortal—and leaves the rest of the field to untramelled liberty. The higher conscience realises the duty of doing positively one's best—proportionately to one's lights, powers and opportunities conditioned by one's practical limitations. It thus places restraints on liberty for sake of the ideal of perfection which it is God's will and right that every man should strive for, and for which every man therefore ought in duty to strive.

(5) The outcome of this psychological programme is to build up a sound and integral character. Character means nothing more nor less than reducing to a living concrete form the principles contained in the abstract ideal, and consolidating them as a set of laws or rules, which regularly dominate the mind and will, and consequently action. In this way life is reduced to one consistent whole which is a living realisation of the ideal.

(6) As acts develop habits, and habits form character so character determines destiny. By the formation of a sound and integral character the aim and object of man's life of probation is achieved already in this life, to be finally realised in results when the time of probation comes to an end by death, and the fruits of the probation are to be enjoyed in everlasting life beyond the grave.

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